

Mo' Mozart than you can shake a baton at
BOOKS. **Page 11**



Spring's on the way. FASH-
ION is looking blooming gor-
geous. **Page 9**



Live like a local: Temple
festivals – LENS **Page 8**



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Disney confirms eyes on Beijing, Shanghai

By Chu Meng

The Walt Disney Corporation confirmed recently that it was in ongoing talks with the Chinese government on building a theme park in the Chinese mainland. Disney spokesman Bob Tucker said on Wednesday night in California that the company may build its second China theme park either in China's capital Beijing or in the country's economic capital, Shanghai.

"We are actually keeping contact with both Shanghai municipal government and Beijing Development and Reform Commission which act on behalf of Beijing Municipal government all the time," Tucker said.

It would be difficult for Disney to make a quick decision between the two cities, Tucker said, noting that the process of choosing resort destinations involved a number of complex factors, including areas' economic, cultural, and political environments.

According to Kanas Lai, public relations officer at the company's Hong Kong office. Disney plans to build only one theme park one the mainland of China, which means the second park will be located in either Shanghai or Beijing.

Hong Kong Cable TV quoted Disney President and Chief Executive Officer Robert Iger this Monday as saying that the company has been discussing the possibility of building a Disneyland theme park in Shanghai. The company denied the rumor on Tuesday.

"The Walt Disney Co has not reached an agreement with Shanghai to build a second them park in China. If we were to reach an agreement for a second park in China, it would not open before 2010," Allannah Goss, the company's spokeswoman told *China Daily*.

Shanghai Municipal government spokesman Jiao Yang confirmed at a press conference on Wednesday that the city had "a long-term plan to bring the Chinese mainland's first Disneyland theme park to the Pudong New Economic Zone," Jiao said, however, that the final decision belonged to the State Council, and declined to reveal any details of the plans.

Along similar lines, the Beijing Development and Reform Commission submitted a report to the State Council at the end of 2005 saying that during the course of the Eleventh Five-Year Plan, Beijing will build a new media industrial zone costing 10 billion yuan in the Daxing District, to the south of the city. Five to ten major multinational corporations will have their China headquarters there – including a Disneyland theme park. However, as of yesterday, the commission refused to confirm the information or reveal new details.

Another important concern, Tucker said, is that building a theme park in the Chinese mainland would influence the company's global allocation strategy, particularly in the Asia-Pacific area. In addition, discussions are sure to be affected by the Hong Kong Disneyland ticketing fiasco during the Spring Festival holiday last week. (See page 5 for related report) Disney would first have to conduct new studies and evaluation of consumer habits in the Chinese market before making any new decisions.



U2 celebrates their glory.

AFP Photo

U2 upstages Carey with five Grammy awards

The rock gods snatched Grammy history from the comeback queen yesterday, as perennial favorites U2 took home five trophies while Mariah Carey had to settle for three.

U2 won the 20th Grammy of their careers, including album of the year for *How to dismantle an atomic bomb* – the same disc that earned them three awards last year.

Carey, one of the best-selling artists of all time, was nominated for a leading eight awards for *The emancipation of Mimi*. She won three in the pre-telecast ceremony; no woman had ever won more than five in one night.

But she was shut out through the televised portion. Besides losing album of the year to

U2, she lost best female pop vocal performance to Kelly Clarkson's triumphant *Since u been gone*, song of the year to U2 and record of the year to Green Day.

"If you think this is going to go to our head, it's too late," U2 frontman Bono said after the group won song of the year for "Sometimes you can't make it on your own." After winning the night's big award, album of the year, Bono told Carey, "You sing like an angel."

John Legend won three awards: best new artist, best R&B album for his debut, *Get lifted*, and best male R&B vocal for the piano ballad "Ordinary people." His mentor, Kanye West, also won three.

Clarkson won two, including best pop album. "I'm sorry I'm crying again on national

television," said the former "American Idol," tearful and shaking as she held her first Grammy. "Thank you so much, you have no idea what this means to me."

Carey was the sentimental favorite, overcoming personal difficulties and a career slump to emerge with the top-selling album and the most popular song, *We belong together*.

But her comeback was upstaged in every way. Not only did she lose in most of the major categories, even her performance was an afterthought – along with everyone else's – after the appearance of Sly Stone, the mercurial, psychedelic pioneer who disappeared from the music scene decades ago and hadn't performed in public since 1993.

(AP)

Jean Reno promotes French film in Beijing



Jean Reno

Photo by Rain Tian

By Qiu Jiaoning

Renowned French actor Jean Reno kicked off the opening ceremony of the third French Film Panorama in Beijing yesterday, launching a feast of French cinema running from February 9 to 14. Reno was in Beijing to promote his latest film, *The Empire of the Wolves*, which was shown at the opening night.

Mr Reno was not the only French celebrity in China for the occasion. A delegation of actors, directors and producers, including legendary French director Claude Lelouch, will tour three Chinese cities to present their

films and participate in post-screening discussions with the public.

The Panorama will showcase some of France's latest and most popular releases in Beijing, Shanghai and Chengdu. A selection of 12 recently released French films will be presented to a Chinese audience, including *The Plane*, *Merry Christmas*, *Zaina*, *The Child*, *Nina's Home*, *The Birthday*, *The Courage to Love*, *By the Pricking of my Thumbs*, *Not Here to be Loved*, *Hidden*, *Frankie*, and *The Empire of the Wolves*.

Viewers will be able to enjoy these films at a number of theatres and multiplexes in Beijing, Chengdu, and Shanghai. The films, chosen to represent the diversity of French cinema, span a wide variety of genres, from action to comedy from children's films to drama.

Jean Reno will also attend his solo movie exhibition, and meet his Chinese fans at the China Film Archive (CFA) theatre today. A selection of his most recent works as well as some old classics will be screened during the two-day exhibition, organized by the CFA. Born in Morocco to Spanish parents before moving to Paris at the age of 17, Reno is one of France's top stars and is famed for his tough-guy roles both at home and all over the world.

Beijingers can enjoy the 12 selected films, shown in French with Chinese subtitles, at the Sun Dong An Cinema (the 5th floor of Sun Dong An Plaza), and the Oriental New Century Plaza (Oriental Plaza).

After the capital leg of their tour, the artistic delegation of internationally known producers and actors will travel to Shanghai and Chengdu to meet with the Chinese public. The closing ceremony of the Panorama will take place in Shanghai on February 14, with the entire delegation in attendance.

China blocks new cigarette companies

By Han Manman

Sha Zukang, head of the Chinese delegation to the UN Commission in Geneva, said at the first conference of signatory parties to the *Convention on Tobacco Control* on Tuesday that China will strictly control domestic cigarette production.

Sha said that China will not establish any new cigarette production companies, including Sino-foreign joint ventures, and that China will step up efforts to merge and restructure existing tobacco companies and strive to host a smokeless Olympic Games in Beijing in 2008.

Officials from more than 110 countries gathered in Geneva on Sunday to attend a two-week meeting in hopes of gaining increased cooperation in curbing tobacco use among the world's 1.3 billion smokers.

In November 2003, the Chinese government signed the *Convention on Tobacco Control*, which went into effect in August 2005. Under the treaty's provisions, China will curb smoking in public places by implementing bans on tobacco advertising, promotions and sponsorships.

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SEPA cracks down on 11 petrochemical polluters

By Qiu Jiaoning

The State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA) announced that it is opening investigations into 127 major petrochemical projects located along rivers, in densely populated areas, and nature reserves. It has ordered 11 heavily polluting factories to clean up or face closure or fines, following a nationwide investigation stemming from last November's benzene spill in the Songhua River.

The 11 factories named include a chemical plant in Liaoning Province that had polluted the drinking water supply for the city of Liaoyang. Other offending companies included steel and chemical nonferrous metals factories, power plants and road projects that were accused of violating noise restrictions.

SEPA has also put 10 metals, transportation and power projects currently under construction or in trial operation on hold for posing an environmental hazard. Those projects include an aluminum refinery with an annual capacity of 300,000 tones in Pingdingshan, Henan Province. The list also includes a chemical fertilizer plant in Shanxi Province that began production before it was authorized to and exceeded waste standards for sulfur dioxide and other gases and chemicals, and a natural gas power plant in the eastern city of Hangzhou.

"The petrochemical industry poses a number of hidden dangers that could result in both regional and structural environmental problems," said Pan Yue, SEPA's deputy director.

Pan said that a series of serious environmental emergencies has resulted in serious damages to public

health, social stability, economic growth and to Chinese diplomatic efforts.

SEPA dictated on Monday that officials should report environmental disasters within an hour of discovering them, and of possible criminal punishment for failing to do so, after announcing that 45 pollution incidents, including six major disasters, had occurred in China since last November.

China has 21,000 chemical plants located along its rivers and coastline, in many cases posing severe risks of disasters with consequences. Of these plants, more than 50 percent are located along either the Yangtze or Yellow River, said SEPA head Zhou Shengxian.

According to the Xinhua News Agency, more than 70 percent of China's rivers and lakes are polluted, as is underground water in 90 percent of Chinese cities.

Beijing increases personal income tax cutoff point for foreigners

By Jackie Zhang

Starting in 2006, the personal income tax cutoff point for foreigners in Beijing has been raised to 4,800 yuan from the original 4,000 yuan.

The cutoff point for foreigners is calculated by combining the cutoff point for local residents and a deduction of 3,200 yuan. Following an increase in the personal income tax cutoff point for local residents from 800 to 1,600 yuan this year, the cutoff point for foreigners increased by 800 yuan as well.

Two categories of foreigners enjoy the additional deduction – those foreigners working in foreign-funded and foreign companies in China, and foreign experts employed by Chinese enterprises, social organizations, public service units, and governmental departments.

At present, over 60,000 foreign people work in China, primarily in major cities like Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. Of the approximately 34,000 foreign nationals in Beijing, roughly 20,000 have gained certificates of employment.

"I'm glad about the increase for the cutoff point. It means that we can get more money than before," said David White, a foreign expert working at a Beijing newspaper. "And I hope that our tax money can go to people who really need it."

Brief News

New human case of bird flu found in Fujian

The Ministry of Health announced one more human case of bird flu in Fujian Province on Wednesday.

The infected is a 26-year-old farmer. She showed symptoms of fever and pneumonia on January 10 and has been hospitalized. She is now in stable condition.

This is the 11th human case of bird flu reported in China. Seven victims have died so far.

New bird flu outbreak confirmed in Shanxi

Ministry of Agriculture confirmed a new outbreak of bird flu in poultry in Shanxi Province Tuesday. 15,000 birds at a poultry farm in Yijing Township, Yangquan City, died over two days, from February 2 to 3.

Veterinary departments in Shanxi have culled 187,745 birds within a three kilometer radius of the affected areas.

Officials nabbed in bribery scandal

Six senior officials from the State Food and Drug Administration have been accused of bribery and taken into custody by the procuratorial department in Beijing, the Beijing Times reported on Tuesday.

Fires kill 63

More than 13,000 fire accidents occurred over the Spring Festival holiday season, which lasted from January 28 to February 4 in China. During that period, fires killed 63 people, injured 47 others and caused 29.63 million yuan (US\$3.67 million) in economic losses.

Railway transport

The Ministry of Railways reports that China's railway network transported 82.47 million passengers nationwide between January 14 and February 5 around the Spring Festival period – an increase of 5.89 million over 2005.

Coal mine deaths to be reduced

China has set a goal of reducing coal mine fatalities by 3.5 percent year-on-year in 2006, Li Yizhong, director of the State Administration of Work Safety, announced.

Trips made by road

About 203.4 million Chinese traveled by buses and cars during this year's seven-day Spring Festival holiday, representing a rise of 5.3 percent over the same period last year, according to the Ministry of Communications.

Environmentally-friendly towns

A total of 99 towns across China have now been honored as "environmentally-friendly" for effectively protecting the environment providing a higher quality of life to local residents, according to a bulletin by the State Environmental Protection Administration.

(By Feng Nianhua)

Urban income gap widens to alarming level

According to a report issued by the State Development and Reform Commission (SDRC) on Sunday, the urban income gap between China's rich and poor has widened to an alarming and unreasonable level.

The SDRC made the announcement based on a social investigation into China's urban residents and relevant statistics from the National Bureau of Statistics.

The SDRC report noted that the income gap is continually expanding. At present, China's Gini Coefficient (an internationally accepted measurement of income equality) is 0.4, a level taken as the international benchmark for alarm.

The report warns that the actual figure could potentially be even higher, as a number of incomes may have been underestimated.

Statistics show that the bottom 20 percent of earners in China's cities only account for 2.75 percent of the country's total urban income – only 4.6 percent of the income of China's top 20 percent.

The SDRC said the widening income inequality gap is occurring in line with China's economic and social development. It names disparities in income between different industries, wage inequalities between employers and employees, and increases in income earned outside of work as the main reasons for the inequality.

Professor Li Yingsheng of the Renmin University of China said that China still lacks an income adjustment mechanism. He called upon the government to further increase the proportion of middle-level income groups and raise the income of the lowest-level groups in order to achieve a stable social stratification. Professor Li participated in the social investigation on urban income.

Officials with the SDRC said the government has also pledged to take tougher measures in the coming years to curb the increasing inequality and make China's income distribution more reasonable.

(Xinhua)

Hello, Turino!



The Chinese delegation raises the national flag in the athletic village yesterday. The XXth Winter Olympic Games is set to open today. Chinese athletes are determined to win more gold medals than ever.

Xinhua Photo

Foreign enterprises approval simplified

By Qiu Jiaoning

The power to approve foreign-invested commercial enterprises will be delegated to provincial level commerce authorities, and to the administrative committees of economic and technological development zones beginning March 1, the Ministry of Commerce (MOC) announced.

The move will simplify the procedures for the approval of foreign-invested enterprises, MOC said. Local authorities will be responsible for approving the establishment of new foreign-invested enterprises and the expansion of enterprises' business scope to include trading and distribution.

The new measures cover some foreign-invested retail shops, provided they meet the following conditions: the area of a single store does not exceed 5000 square meters, the total number of stores does not exceed 3 in the same city, and there are no more than 30 similar stores operated by the same enterprise.

Also covered are cases where the area of a single store does not exceed 3000 square meters, the total number of stores does not exceed 5 in the same location, and the similar stores opened by the same enterprise does not exceed 50, and cases where the area of a single store does not exceed 300 square meters.

In general, the time necessary for approval of foreign-invested enterprise registration can be substantially shortened. The goal is to hasten the development of full-fledged trading and distribution operations in China. It should also be more efficient to set up branches and retail outlets, and to apply for subsequent changes, as everything can be handled at the local level. In addition, existing foreign-invested enterprises will be able to carry out restructuring plans within a more realistic timeframe, as approval can be granted at the local level.

China to build up marital records

By Han Manman

The Ministry of Civil Affairs issued new regulations on administration of marital registration files. The new regulations consolidate existing registration information and dictate standardized guidelines for new marriage and divorce records.

It is the first time China has issued regulations on the management of marital records.

Yang Dawen, president of the Marriage and Family Law Research Institute, said that China has long been in need of detailed, standardized marriage registration regulations.

Provincial governments had previously been in charge of collecting marriage registrations. The differences between different provinces' collection and recording procedures led to frequent confusion – in some cases, leading into issues of children's parentage and legitimacy.

"Standardized regulations are beneficial in many ways," Yang said. "For example, the new regulations will help to collect statistics about marriage, re-marriage and divorce rates to further improve China's marriage law."

Under the new regulations, marital registration files must be stored for 100 years. Expired files will be reviewed; those whose preservation would present no value will be destroyed, while those found to be worth preserving will be classified as permanent files. In addition, the catalog and summary of the marriage registration files will be preserved permanently.

The Ministry of Civil Affairs has also begun collecting existing marital files from each province-level district to set up a nationwide database.

This information will eventually be available on the Internet for public viewing, in a move to stop bigamy, overlapping registrations, and other issues raised by the former obscurity of registration information.

Weekly Review – World

Govt. expected to announce AIG settlement

In one of the largest regulatory settlements ever, American International Group Inc. is expected to pay US\$1.6 billion to settle accusations of bid-rigging and the use of deceptive accounting practices, according to people familiar with the settlement terms.

The settlement will be split by the Securities and Exchange Commission, which will receive about US\$800 million to compensate injured investors, and New York regulators who brought a civil case against AIG last summer.

Chris Winans, a spokesman for New York-based AIG, said Wednesday that the company had no comment.

AIG, one of the world's largest insurers, was accused by New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer last May of using unacceptable accounting tactics to make the company's financial performance appear better than it was, misleading both investors and regulators. The New York State Insurance Department also was involved in the investigation.

The settlement is believed to be one of the largest regulatory settlements with a single company.

– AP

Bank of Japan governor expects inflation to rise

Toshihiko Fukui, Bank of Japan governor, said on Thursday he expected inflation would begin to rise by a wider margin in the first quarter, adding to speculation that the central bank is preparing to end its super-loose quantitative-easing policy.

“We could not say today that the consumer price index has stabilized above zero, but from the January data onwards, CPI will show a relatively clear rise,” he said, speaking at a press conference after a two-day policy board meeting.

Private economists expect the core CPI, which includes fresh food prices, to rise by 0.4 percent in January and February, compared with an increase of just 0.1 percent in November and December, and negative rates until last September.

Mr. Fukui on Thursday indicated his apparent dislike for inflation targeting, saying that stable Japanese prices tended to be lower than those in other countries. In the 1980s, average inflation was about 1.3 per cent, the bank said.

– FT

EU pressed to open doors to E European workers

The European Commission pressed western Europe to throw open its doors to workers from ex-communist EU newcomer states, dismissing fears of a mass influx of cheap ‘Polish plumber’ labor.

The European Union's executive arm said there was no evidence of a negative impact on three EU states - Britain, Ireland and Sweden - which have let in workers from former communist states since the bloc's May 2004 expansion.

“This report clearly shows that the movement of free workers has not had disruptive effects on the labor market” of the existing 15 EU countries since the “big bang” enlargement, said EU jobs commissioner Vladimir Spidla.

Most ‘Old Europe’ governments have kept their doors shut to potential cheap labor from the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia since 2004.

– AFP

(Edited by Victor Bai / Grace Wei)

US Justice Department indicts Chinese bankers

By Chu Meng

Two former branch managers of the Bank of China (BOC) have been indicted in the US on charges that they tried to defraud China's second largest bank of US\$485 million.

“Every move is strictly under the American indictment procedures at present. And we keep in close contact with the BOC and the Chinese government on a daily basis,” assistant US Attorney General Alice Fisher said.

A grand jury in Las Vegas returned the 15-count indictment against the former bank managers, Xu Chaofan and Xu Guojun. Their wives, Kuang Wanfang and Yu Yingyi, and a relative of Xu Chaofan, Kuang Huabao, were also charged in the 15-count indictment.

“Investigators were able to piece together the complex scheme of racketeering, money laundering and fraud charged in this indictment because of the extensive cooperation we received from our law enforcement partners overseas,” Alice Fisher said.

BOC's spokesman Wang Zhaowen said: “The

bank will support the US Justice Department's prosecution of two former bank officials and their relatives. We will cooperate positively. We'll try every possible means to recover the stolen funds and ensure financial security.”

Defendants Xu Chaofan and Xu Guojun worked at BOC's Kaiping branch in Guangdong Province. They were first charged in September 2004 in an 11-count indictment with violating immigration laws by trying to illegally gain US citizenship.

The new charges in the indictment stem from an elaborate scheme over a 13 year period to defraud the BOC of at least US\$485 million, orchestrated by former managers Xu Chaofan, Xu Guojun and Yu Zhendong. And Yu Zhendong has been sent back to China by the American Justice Department last year

All five defendants were also charged with using false travel documents in Hong Kong to obtain US visas. The two women were also charged with entering into fraudulent marriages with US citizens to obtain permanent US citizenship.

Bank of China targets Hong Kong IPO in May

Bank of China plans to list in Hong Kong in May and later wants to raise more cash by selling shares on domestic markets.

The lender, one of China's four major state-owned banks, has filed its dual-listing plan with the State Council or cabinet and expects the initial public offering of Hong Kong in May. After the issue of H-shares in Hong Kong, BOC will then issue A-shares on the Shanghai Stock Exchange as soon as possible, citing an unnamed source familiar with the matter.

The Hong Kong-based *South China Morning Post* reported Wednesday that the authorities may decide what portion of Bank of China's existing shares would be listed as H-shares this week.

The State Council last month gave in-principle approval to Bank of China's plan to sell up to 15 percent of its enlarged share capital in the Hong Kong IPO.

– AFP



Will a golden rose make love last?

Golden roses are selling in Shenyang, capital city China's northeastern liaoning Province, for the coming St Valentine's Day. The prices of the roses range from hundreds to thousands of yuan. This lover's day has become another festival spree in China.

Photo by CFP

Outlook

Bernanke vows to do his best

New Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke vowed Monday to do his best to carry out the central bank's mission of fighting inflation, fostering economic growth, and nurturing a healthy jobs climate.

“Our mission as set forth by the Congress is a critical one,” Bernanke said Monday at his ceremonial swearing-in at the Fed's headquarters. Bernanke's first day on the job was last Wednesday.

President Bush attended the ceremony, marking only the third visit by a president to the Federal Reserve.

Before becoming chief of the Fed, Bernanke, 52, served as the president's top economist as chairman of the White House's Council of Economic Advisers.

A former Fed governor and Princeton economics professor, Bernanke said he recognized “taking up the challenge of leading an institution with such weighty responsibilities” and looked forward to working with a staff that possesses “unmatched expertise and experience.”

He succeeds Greenspan, the man referred to as ‘the maestro’, the greatest central banker whoever lived and the second-most important person in Washington. Considered one of the country's foremost economic thinkers, Bernanke has limited political experience.

Bernanke will go before Congress next week to deliver the first installment of the Fed's twice-a-year report on the economy. Investors, economists and politicians will be closely watching his performance.

– AP

Analyst's Take:

The chairman of the Federal Reserve is regarded as the most influential economic policy job in the world. Alan Greenspan left his successor not only a wide space to set his own policy but also some uncertainties about the future.

The current US deficit soared well past US\$700 billion in 2005. The federal budget deficit is also following an upward trend. In addition, the lack of a well-defined policy road map will make Bernanke's job more difficult.

One of the biggest challenges Bernanke

faces as the new chairman is that the rising indebtedness of the US personal savings is actually declining, and the country is borrowing heavily from abroad.

Bernanke's attitude towards China will not be much different from Greenspan's, as both of them have recognized China's economic and trade significance.

Bernanke, a well-known monetary economist, has previously served as a Fed governor and spent the last seven months chairing the Council of Economic Advisors. Regarding his depth of knowledge and understanding of monetary policy, the business and political communities have had a good chance to learn about him.

He has been a big proponent of greater openness and transparency that has characterized monetary policymaking in the latter years of Greenspan's era.

– Chen Fengying, director of Institute of World Economics at China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (Qiu Jiaoning)

Private companies worried by new postal law

By Jackie Zhang

Private express delivery companies are coming to Beijing to lobby legislators to protect their right to deliver mail following new legislation that could prevent them from doing business.

The seventh amended edition of the postal law, drafted in January, states the delivery of all letters weighing less than 350 grams should be delivered by the State Postal Bureau system.

“It means that if the amendment of the law is passed by the National People's Congress, private express delivery companies will have no room to survive,” said Liu Heping, vice manager of Shanghai Dongfang Wanbang Express Delivery Company.

“We will visit governmental departments

including the Legislative Affairs Office of the State Council, State Post Bureau, Ministry of Information, Ministry of Industry, and Ministry of Commerce,” said Liu Heping, “We hope to let them know our opinions towards the draft amendment of the law.”

“As a result of the amendment, the State Post Bureau could monopolize the express delivery market in China,” Liu said. “However, it does not have enough working staff and power to shoulder this work, because they cannot extend services quickly, including extending the number of employees, equipment, and funds. Take Shanghai as an example. The working staff in private express delivery companies has reached more than 100,000 while the number in post offices are around 30,000,” said Liu Heping.

At present, there are more than 100,000 private express delivery companies in China with a staff of more than 3 million. These companies have shouldered more than 80 percent of the delivery services in cities and more than 60 percent across the provinces. And the delivery of letters less than 350 grams has occupied more than 90 percent of the total business.

Liu Jianxin, secretary general of the Express Working Committee of the China International Freight Forwarders Association, said that in foreign countries, the national postal industry units are only responsible for the delivery services of residents' private letters. Delivery services for other letters, such as business letters, are open to private enterprises.

Weekly Review – Nation

Chery signs seal with Russian company

By Victor Bai

Chinese automobile manufacturer Chery Automotive Co. (CAC) has signed a partnership agreement with Russian-based Avtotor to assemble cars in Russia.

Details on the joint venture are still under discussion, reported Economic Information Daily who quoted a manager from Chery.

Russian media sources confirmed the news and said Chery also plans to establish a factory with Avtotor if Chery cars are sold successfully in Russia.

Chery estimates that investment in the new factory would total US\$200 million.

Avtotor has also signed partnership deals with two other Chinese manufacturers, Nanjing Yuejin (trucks) and Zhongxing (SUVs) in July 2005.

Hutchison approved to list 3G operation in Italy

By Baruh Kohen

Hong Kong conglomerate Hutchison Whampoa Ltd., said Wednesday it had got approval to launch the initial public offering (IPO) of its third generation (3G) mobile phone operation in Italy.

Italy's securities regulator Consob on Tuesday gave the green light to the IPO of 3 Italia SpA (‘3 Italia’), Hutchison's Italian 3G unit, said a statement issued Wednesday by the Hong Kong-based group.

Hutchison, holding 95 percent of 3 Italia, planned to list the company's shares on the Italian stock exchange in the first quarter of this year.

Investing in various fields from ports to telecommunications, Hutchison has expanded 3G operations in overseas markets, including those of Britain, Australia, Austria, Ireland, Denmark, Sweden, and Israel.

Nortel, Huawei to set up Broadband JV

By Simon Lim

Nortel and leading Chinese telecommunications provider Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd., are to establish a joint venture for developing ultra broadband access solutions.

The two companies have also signed a supply agreement that allows Nortel to immediately begin engaging customers with Huawei's broadband access portfolio.

The new venture will combine Huawei's market-leading broadband access solutions with Nortel's voice and broadband networking technologies to create a new product portfolio in the broadband access market.

These products will give service providers the ability to converge the delivery of voice, video, data and wireless services to business and residential customers onto a common IP platform that supports copper, fiber and fixed wireless networks.

The two parties have agreed that the joint venture will be majority-owned by Nortel, with its headquarters based in Ottawa.

COSCO, Sinopec join hands

By Tom Carter

China Ocean Shipping (Group) Company (COSCO) will become a long-term partner of the country's largest oil importer - China Petroleum and Chemical Corporation (Sinopec).

The two giant companies signed a contract on Wednesday, through which COSCO will be responsible for shipping imported oil for Sinopec.

The shipping company hopes to import 6 million tons in 2006 and with the goal of reaching 30 million tons in the coming years, according to the contract.

Economic observers said the contract indicates a progress in China's independence in transporting imported oil, which will be of great importance to ensure the security of long-distance oil transport.

Modernization Report blueprints China's social development



A birdseye view of Quanzhou, the first medium-sized city to reach xiaokang (moderately developed) level in China.

By Fu Ruijuan

"The China Modernization Report 2006" was released at a seminar Tuesday organized by the China Center for Modernization Research (CCMR) under the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS).

The research report focuses on social modernization. Last year modernization of the economy was highlighted. Through analyzing the history and current situation of the social modernization in China, the report draws a roadmap for China's social modernization.

The annual report was first published in 2001. "The China Modernization Report 2006" is the sixth of its kind.

The roadmap for China's social modernization

The roadmap for China's social modernization contains both strategic objectives or a 'canal map' as the authors named it. The basic philosophy of the roadmap is to adopt the comprehensive social modernization theory, coordinate and promote the two phases of the social modernization, speed up the shifts from agricultural society to industrial and knowledge-based society, and finally catch up with the second-phase social modernization level of developed countries.

The roadmap suggests that China adopt five strategies before 2010, including a new-type urbanization strategy. By the year 2020, the country expects to be completing its urbanization and by 2030, will have in place a nine-year compulsory education. The country hopes also to be able to build an informed society, popularize 12-year compulsory education, eliminate absolute poverty, and establish a new, effective welfare system. By 2040, China should have successfully popularized higher education and by 2050 will be a moderately developed country. By the end of this century, the country will fully realize the status of an advanced developed country. The roadmap contains six parts:

Firstly, the canal road for China's social modernization: to coordinate and facilitate the two phases of social modernization in accordance with the comprehensive social modernization theory; to build the country into one that boasts new type urbanization, welfare, mobilization, information; to develop into a moderately-developed country by the year 2050; to reach the level of 'advanced social modernization' by the end of 21st century.

Secondly, the quantitative objectives of China's social modernization: to conclude the first phase of social modernization in



Newly built office in Shenzhen, the fastest growing city in China



Driving a car to the office is no longer a dream in China.

Photos by IC

the first half of the century, bringing itself into the ranks of the world's top 40 developed countries; to complete the second phase of social modernization and vault into the top 20 in the world in terms of social modernization.

Thirdly, in the 21st century, we have to achieve three basic goals.

To achieve the status of a primarily-developed country by 2020 and moderately-developed country by 2050; to achieve the status of a developed country by the end of the century.

There are six stages in the course of China's social modernization including: the mature stage of the first phase of social modernization by 2020, the transitional stage of the first phase and the preliminary stage

of the second phase by 2030, the developing stage of the second phase by 2050, the mature stage of the second phase by 2080, the transitional stage of the second phase by 2100. There four stages in the first half of the century and two in the second half.

To reduce and finally eliminate the year variation between China and developed countries.

The monitoring index for China's social modernization: there are two categories of index including social life monitoring index and structuring monitoring index. There are altogether 36 indexes.

Social life monitoring: it has three aspects including living quality, living conditions and living environment. There are altogether 18 indices in this category.

Social structure monitoring: it also has three aspects including social transform, social welfare and social harmony.

The opportunity and challenges for China's social modernization

There are ten challenges, which are at the same time opportunities, facing China's social modernization in the 21st century.

1. To maintain a sustainable development of people's quality of life and speed up the shift from a three-dimensional society to a knowledge-based society.
2. Taking full advantage of the peaceful international environment and catching up with the world's advanced level.
3. Employing new-type urbanization.
4. Popularizing a 12-year compulsory education and upgrading the quality of labor.
5. To build the public health care network and increase the health level of the people.
6. To establish the common welfare system and make everyone enjoy the benefits of social welfare.
7. To build the information management system and promote proper mobilization of the people.
8. To eliminate absolute poverty and promote social equality.
9. To eliminate knowledge and information gap, and make the information network accessible to everyone.
10. To build an effective and harmonious society.

Ten suggestions

1. To develop and implement the roadmap for the social modernization for China.
2. To promote the two shifts of social development models, upgrade people's life quality and build the trust mechanism.
3. To continue to adopt the 'anti-poverty' strategy, and build a country without absolute poverty.
4. To adopt social welfare strategy, and build an effective and harmonious welfare system.
5. To implement new-type urbanization strategy, and draw a balance between urban and rural areas.
6. To adopt information strategy and build an informed society.
7. To adopt knowledge strategy and build a knowledge-based society.
8. To popularize compulsory education and higher education step by step.
9. To facilitate the modernization of the health care system, to increase the funding for public health.
10. To eliminate information gap, and build a life-long learning society.

'Canal map' to medical security

By Fu Ruijuan

"China can achieve a 100 percent medical security coverage rate by the year 2050," said He Chuanqi, director of the CCMR.

According to the report, it is one of the goals to build China into a country without absolute poverty.

"We can't eliminate relative poverty, both in developing countries and in developed countries. But in given time we can eliminate absolute poverty," he said.

"For example, there is no absolute poverty in developed countries. They have a very effective welfare system."

The report has analyzed the history of developed countries and the situation in China. The experts involved suggest a roadmap for China to achieve modernization.

"The road we suggest is called 'canal map'. Following this road, China can learn from developed countries, and at the same time realize modernization in its own way," said He.

The research subject for 'China Modernization Report 2007' will be decided in the first half of this year after serious study, and the possible subjects include industry, agriculture, education and environment.

Other voices:

US\$1,300 a month – in 45 years time...

By Fu Ruijuan

Song Tao believes it is a good idea to implement the 12-year compulsory education, but the question lies in the quality.

"Compulsory education provides every child access to education, but we should pay more attention to the quality of the teachers and the cultivation of the students," Song said, "We can have more students but the point is innovation."

As to the US\$1,300 (10,472 yuan) monthly salary by 2050 suggested by the report, Professor Song said the goal is achievable, but will be demanding.

"China has to work hard to improve the quality of its production, upgrade mechanical equipment, and finally increase exportation, which can help to make the goal realistic."

– Song Tao, professor from the School of Economics at Renmin University

Five years

By Chu Meng

"But who can tell me how much I am about to earn in five years?"

For all the experts and statistics collected by the report, why they did not present a report for 2010 first instead of one for 2050? I believe more people would pay more attention to a report that is much more closer and practical to our lives. Compared with a vague picture for next 45 years. People are eager to know where their lives will be in five years, or even in two or three years. People want to know what kind of house they can live in, what kind of cars they can afford and how much it will cost them to go to the hospital. Frankly speaking, how many people can make sure they will live another 45 years? If I can not earn US\$1,300 a month in 2050, whom I should blame then?"

– Lou Xianyang, a citizen from Henan Province

Disneyland suffers crowd problems in Hong Kong

By Chu Meng

Thousands of people lined up to visit Mickey Mouse at Hong Kong Disneyland during the Chinese Spring Festival holiday last week. But when they were welcomed by a closed steel gate and told by the park that they would not be allowed in, they got grumpy.

Crowds of angry tourists from the Chinese mainland, brandishing tickets after being turned away at the Disneyland entrance, had shouting matches with the police and security guards. Some clambered over the heavy steel gates after guards closed them, and in a scene played repeatedly on Phoenix Television, an unhappy child had to be passed by the crowd over the spikes of the gates to his parents inside.

This Tuesday, Fengtan Peiling, commissioner of the Hong Kong Consumer Council, called the incident “a typical example of hurting the rights of consumers.” Fengtang explained: “The American-led Disneyland completely failed to learn about the cultural traditions and consumption habits of the Chinese people. It must be a hard lesson for them. The culprit was a discount-ticket promotion: Disneyland had failed to anticipate the rush of vacationers from China during the Lunar New Year holiday. As the crowds trying to enter the park swelled, officials closed the gates and stopped admitting people who had bought tickets in advance.”

The problems began last month when Disney introduced a discounted one-day ticket plan that allowed the holder to use the ticket any time within six months of purchase, except on designated “special days” when the park anticipated big crowds.

Wang Shuxin, chief director of the Shenzhen Tourism Tour Group Center complained: “I have to blame Hong Kong Disneyland; they gave us a hard push, and put us into an extremely difficult situation. The city of Shenzhen, because of its unique geographic location, acts as a bridge linking the Chinese mainland and the Hong Kong Special Administration Zone. Our center is in charge of overseeing mainland tourists traveling to Hong Kong. Up till now, a total of 325 tourists have registered in our center for compensation through their tourism companies. After we check the validity of their tickets through Hong Kong Disneyland, we will have to pay their compensation in advance.”

In Hong Kong, the four-day public holiday for Lunar New Year began January 28 and ended last Tuesday. The park had designated those dates as special days - but in China, the Lunar New Year holiday lasts a full week, so the Mainlanders were able to use their discounted Disney tickets on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

Chinese tour agencies had bought large batches of discounted tickets and brought in busloads of mainlanders to Hong Kong this week. Even the Hong Kong government issued a statement late Thursday, calling on Disneyland to improve its ticketing and entry procedures.

Bill Ernest, the executive vice president of the park apologized to the public for the third time this Tuesday. He acknowledged that numbers were larger than they anticipated. The park has a capacity of about 30,000 people, but the actual number was at least double that. At the root of the trouble was a new discounted flexible ticketing system that allows guests to visit on any day within a six-month period except at holiday periods. They had erroneously omitted to include the last part of the week under the exempted days, prompting hundreds of holidaying ticket holders to surge to the park.”

“No one is more disappointed about this than we are,” he continued. “And we apologize to those who have been inconvenienced. A reasonable compensation plan to make up for consumers’ loss is under discussion right now. We will develop a more workable ticket strategy in special consideration of Chinese holidays before the next holiday week.”

Some travel agencies that took bookings for the resort said they would sue Disneyland. The ticket fiasco is the latest setback for the US\$ 3 billion Hong Kong Disneyland, the first Disney theme park in China, which opened to huge fanfare in September.



Disneyland has become a tourist hotspot in Hong Kong since it opened last September.

Photo by Lin Liangbiao

College graduates compete for village official positions

By Han Manman

The Beijing municipal government will recruit two thousand university students who will graduate this summer to work as assistant village administrators in the city's 3,978 rural areas.

During the three-day recruitment period for Beijing students studying in other provinces from Monday to Wednesday, more than 1,200 candidates applied, much higher than expected. A Beijing municipal government staff member responsible for recruitment said that local recruitment will run from February 15 to March 15, and will likely to attract enough applicants to ensure competition for village official positions among college graduates..

Traditionally, rural work has been looked down upon as low-paying and unglorious, a sentiment that has gradually disappeared in recent years. As college graduates encounter difficulty in the urban job market of Beijing, many turn their gaze towards rural areas. To take advantage of this, the Beijing government is offering priority status to graduates willing to work in village positions - many of which are more enticing than urban jobs - to attract talented graduates to local rural administration.

According to Beijing Municipal Commission of Rural Affairs deputy director Zhang Fengfu, any college graduate from Beijing or outside areas accepted as a “village official” will be required to sign a three-year labor contract with the local township government. Graduates will be paid 2,500 to 3,000 yuan per month, and the local government will pay for their insurance; after three years of satisfactory work, they can enjoy full civil servant status or be free to choose other jobs. Non-Beijing college graduates who spend three years as “village officials” will be also given Beijing residency. Those who wish to go back to school will receive preferential treatment when applying for post-graduate studies.

“In a company, a position as a minor clerk is the best I can hope for, but in a rural setting, I could have the opportunity to quickly become involved at the management level, which would improve my abilities and confidence,” a student surnamed Xu said, adding that “most graduates’ first year salary is between 2,000 and 3,000 yuan; some even less than that.” Zhang Lei, a student at the Southwestern University of Finance and Economics, said that a village official position offers better job stability than a regular job. And a university senior from Shanxi province studying in Beijing found the prospect of a Beijing residence permit and civil servant status appealing, noting that both were difficult for non-Beijing residents to get.

Few of the current village officials in Beijing's 3,978 rural areas have high levels of educations. Director Lu of the Wanzying village committee said that college graduates are beneficial to rural development, as they bring along with them new knowledge and skills to better restructure leading teams. “Our village now has two college graduates,” Lu said. “They’re familiar with many new management theories, and have helped us overcome a lot of difficulties. One of them even plans to set up a website to promote our village.”

“Talent is very important for our village,” said Zheng Qi, Yaoting village committee director. “Their coming could bring us new energy and valuable techniques.” While Zheng said that he welcomes college graduates, he also noted that “the one weakness of college graduates is that their book-learning doesn’t always work in the real world.”

A cartoon’s portrait of America



Some 1,500 Muslim faithfuls demonstrate, February 5, in Brussels, to protest against several European newspapers that published cartoons of Prophet Mohammed. Photo by Jacques Collet

The Washington Post editorial, February 9

The trouble started in Denmark, a faraway country of which we know little. It revolves around cartoons, an art form we associate with light humor. It has sparked riots in Surabaya, Tehran, Peshawar and rural Somalia, places where there aren’t many Americans in the best of times. Perhaps that explains the muted American reactions to the violence, anger and deaths - nine so far- sparked by a dozen Danish cartoons depicting the prophet Muhammad. Nevertheless, the controversy has exposed a few less attractive political undercurrents in America, too:

Schadenfreude - or, rather, Americans feeling just a teensy bit relieved that Europeans are the object of flag burnings and riots instead of themselves. To my embarrassment, I felt an involuntary twinge of this myself when I read of cartoon-inspired riots outside a Norwegian NATO base in Afghanistan. In Oslo last year, I was told by a well-traveled, well-educated Norwegian that “America is the most dangerous country in the world.”

(I wonder if he thinks so now.) But I also hear a note in the sanctimonious State Department communique, which proclaimed that “inciting religious or ethnic hatreds in this manner is not acceptable.” Actually, the European newspapers weren’t trying to incite hatred; they were making a point about their own laws and traditions. Were we rushing to look good in the Muslim world at a moment when Europeans, for once, look worse?

Hypocrisy of the cultural left. Dozens of American newspapers, including *The Post*, have stated that they won’t reprint the cartoons because, in the words of one self-righteous editorial, they prefer to “refrain from gratuitous assaults on religious symbols.” Fair enough -- but is this always true? An excellent domestic parallel is the fracas that followed the 1989 publication of “*Piss Christ*,” a photograph of Christ on a crucifix submerged in a jar of urine. That picture - a work of art that received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts - led to congressional denunciations, protests and letter-writing campaigns.

At the time, many US newspapers that refused last week to publish the Danish cartoons - the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Boston Globe* (but apparently not *The Post*) - did publish *Piss Christ*. The photographer, Andres Serrano, enjoyed his 15 minutes of fame, even appearing in a *New York Times* fashion spread. The picture was exhibited at the Whitney Museum of American Art and elsewhere. The moral: While we are nervous about gratuitously offending believers in distant, underdeveloped countries, we don’t mind gratuitously offending believers at home.

Hypocrisy of the right-wing blogosphere. Remember the controversy over *Newsweek* and the Koran? Last year *Newsweek* printed an allegation about mistreatment of the Koran at Guantanamo Bay Naval Base that - although strikingly similar to interrogation techniques actually used to intimidate Muslims at Guantanamo - was

not substantiated by an official government investigation. It hardly mattered: Abroad, Muslim politicians and clerics promoted and exaggerated the Koran story, just as they are now promoting and exaggerating the Danish cartoon story. The result was rioting and violence on a scale similar to the rioting and violence of the past week.

But although that controversy was every bit as manipulated as this one, self-styled US ‘conservatives’ blamed not cynical politicians and clerics but *Newsweek* for (accidentally) inciting violence in the Muslim world: “Newsweek lied, people died.” Worse, much of the commentary implied that *Newsweek* was not only wrong to make a mistake (which it was) but also that the magazine was wrong to investigate the alleged misconduct of U.S. soldiers. Logically, the bloggers should now be attacking the Danish newspaper for (less accidentally) inciting violence in the Muslim world. Oddly enough, though, I’ve heard no cries of “*Jyllands-Posten* insulted, people died.” The moral is: We defend press freedom if it means Danish cartoonists’ right to caricature Muhammad; we don’t defend press freedom if it means the mainstream media’s right to investigate the US government.

Of course, some good may come out of this story, even in this country. If nothing else, this controversy should bring an end to that naive, charming and sadly incorrect American theory of international relations that “the more we all learn about one another, the less we will fight.” Gradually, the Islamic world is learning that we don’t respect religion in the same manner they do. Slowly, we are learning that they feel differently about the printed word, and the printed picture, from us. And somehow, I’ve got a feeling that this new knowledge will be not the beginning of understanding but the inspiration for more violence.

(The above article does not represent the views of *Beijing Today*.)

Run down houses removed from ancient academic gardens

By Chu Meng

Renovations will begin on the two famous ancient gardens of Langrunyuan and Jingchunyuan in the north campus of Beijing University next week, with all residential bungalows around it to be removed.

According to the university, the Beijing International Mathematics Research Center will be built on the site where residential bungalows used to be. The project will be finished in 2007.

Ma Xiaoping, an officer from the property administration center said, "We invited public bids from construction companies. The theme requirement is to build up a new center in the ancient Chinese style. And it must be in accordance with the two ancient gardens. Any ancient house will not be removed."

Beijing University, formerly the Jingshi Da Xuetang (Metropolitan University) in the Qing Dynasty, opened in December 1898. The 230-hectare university campus is located in Haidian District, an area in the western suburbs of Beijing renowned for its gardens and parks. To the north of the university are the remains of the Yuan Ming Yuan Palace, and to the west is the Summer Palace.

Located in the core campus area of the university, the gardens of Langrunyuan and Jingchunyuan were royal gardens in the Old Summer Palace. During the late Qing



A watercolor painting of Langrunyuan in the Qing Dynasty



A corner of the bungalows around the ancient gardens
Picture and photo provided by Beijing University

Dynasty, these gardens were used for summer cabinet meetings, and later became royal accommodation.

These gardens now house the China Center for Economic Research and the Committee of Education Foundation. The ancient academic gardens have been equipped with multimedia teaching facilities and students can enjoy the quiet and beautiful environment of the gardens while learning about both the modern and ancient developments of China.

Ma said, "After Metropolitan University was renamed Beijing University in May, 1912, bungalows were built up around those gardens for faculty members. However, because of a lack of regulations and poor management, those houses became overcrowded and fell into disrepair. Some illegal extensions have also been erected between rows. At present, about 300 houses seriously harm the maintenance of ancient gardens, and also worsen the scenery of the whole campus."

Shao Shuhong, a 67-year-old resident, talked about her love of those old houses: "I have lived beside the garden of Langrunyuan for 47 years. When I was young I worked for the university. And it was then I met my professor husband. We got married in these houses. Now I have had three grandchildren. One of them is reading at Beijing University. I do not want to move out."

More athletes for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games

By Jackie Zhang

Fifty-four athlete places will be added in five events in the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, and the number of female athletes will be increased by 128.

The 54 places will be added in five events - fencing, modern pentathlon, world taekwondo, triathlon, and cycling.

There will be an increase of 12 fencing athletes: three individual places for each of the four-team events. Modern pentathlon will have four additional places each for men and women. According to the request from World Taekwondo Federation, two men and two women will be added in order to

balance the allocation of places across continents, since Oceania will take part in the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games as a new region.

Additionally, the EB decided to increase the numbers for the triathlon by an additional five men and women. The EB also agreed to a potential increase of about 20 athletes for cycling, depending on the number of double starter (an athlete who applies for more than one event) athletes.

Also, 128 female additional athletes will compete at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. This number will be included within the total number of 10,500 athletes.

Sailing across the ice

By Jackie Zhang

The Beijing skyline, long filled with kites, saw a new type of kite make an appearance this winter: one attached to a snowboard.

As an owner of a sports equipment store, Bei Ji is a fan of extreme sports. He started kite snowboarding at the beginning of this winter. Because of the snow this Tuesday, he and his friends decided to practice it at Shichahai.

Bei Ji said that the snow on the ice surface of Shichahai was thin and the resistance of the ice was limited, creating poor conditions.

Kite snowboarding is an extreme sport that combines kite flying and snowboarding.

The kites must be made of foil in order to let them rise easily. There are two kinds of kites especially for kite snowboarding: standard foil-made kites and air-filled kites.

The kites that Bei Ji used were air-filled kites which could reduce the resistance caused by strong wind.

At present, Bei Ji and his friends are planning to go to Bashang, northwest of Beijing, for another day of kite snowboarding.

Bei Ji was one of the founders of the A2 Board Club online, which was established three years ago. At present, more than 600 members have joined this online club.

Photo by Ni Jianing



Photos by Rain Tian



Lantern up in the wind

The lantern garden party of Chinese traditional Lanterns Festival is welcoming thousands of tourists in eastern Beijing's Chaoyang Park. It will last until the 14th day of Chinese Lunar New Year.

'Love Wall' set up at Great Wall

By Han Manman

"My darling, I will love you for ever" "Great Wall, I'm coming": such carvings on the Great Wall bricks in Beijing make the wall look like a bulletin board in the sun. In order to protect the ancient wall from visitors' graffiti, a 'Love Wall' has been set up this week at the Juyongguan section to provide space for lovers' notes.

Lovers who want to write down their name or love story on the Great Wall can get a piece of Love Wall brick by paying 999 yuan.

Liu Jianhua, the principal of the Love Wall project said that the Great Wall has been seriously destroyed by visitors. However, stopping visitors from writing is not an easy job. Because of an old Chinese saying 'He who does not climb the Great Wall is not a true man', too many Chinese want to become 'heroes' by carving their names and feelings on its bricks.

According to Liu, the more than 80 meters long, 7.5 meters high Love Wall is located in the central part of the Juyongguan Great Wall. "The whole wall consists of 9,999 marble bricks. We will sell 99 bricks at 999 yuan each before St Valentine's Day," Liu said, adding, "The income will not only pay for the cost of the Love Wall and renovate the Great Wall but also help to pay for supervision of the wall."

The project operator will provide help in designing a special marble brick for the first 99 lovers before St Valentine's Day. The lovers will also enjoy a free lifetime Juyongguan Great Wall visiting card.

"999 yuan a brick, how fun it is! I could use 999 yuan to buy many gifts for my girlfriend and pass a romantic St Valentine's Day. The Love Wall is obviously a beautiful excuse to earn money," said Lin Jinhua, who is considering what to get his girlfriend for St Valentine's Day.

Dong Huiyao, vice-president of the Great Wall Society of China said that in the absence of effective protection regulations, many units try different ways to make money off the Great Wall. He said that the Great Wall Society and Badaling section of the Great Wall began to ask for suggestions from the public last year on how to clean the wall without damaging it. "We have received more than 6,000 pieces of advices on how to repair the 'scars' on the Great Wall," said Dong, adding, "It is hard to say if the Love Wall's establishment could work to reduce the graffiti."



Beijing sees baby boom in the Year of Dog

The Year of the Dog (in 2006) is expected to produce a high birth rate for the third year running.

The Beijing Maternity Hospital helped deliver 324 babies during the Spring Festival between January 29 and February 7 and more mothers have applied to have their babies delivered at the hospital in the first half of 2006, according to the *Beijing Morning Post*.

The number of babies born in the Spring Festival holiday in Beijing is about 30 percent more than the same period in the last two years.

A total of 10,117 babies were born in the hospital in 2005, the Year of the Rooster, 513 more than the previous year, the Year of the Monkey.

Statistics show 727 women have registered to deliver babies in the Beijing Maternity Hospital in February, 913 in March, 820 in April and 750 in May. The figures are all higher than for the same periods in the past two years.

The Beijing Maternity Hospital is one of the biggest maternity hospitals in the capital. Some experts believe that this indicates the start of another baby boom.

The Chinese zodiac moves in a 12-year cycle named after animals, starting with the Year of the Rat and ending with the Year of the Pig. (Xinhuanet)

Women-only carriages for trains

Shanghai Railway Station has begun to offer a special carriage service for female passengers on two express trains between the largest metropolis in eastern China and the country's capital, *Beijing Times* said on Wednesday.

It is believed the move will be conducive to ensuring more comfortable and private space for female travelers.

The Shanghai railway station has arranged two special sleeping carriages with eight cushioned berths on each of the through trains, dubbed Z6 and Z22, respectively, between Shanghai and Beijing, the newspaper said.

Ticket fares will not be raised for the special carriages, the paper added.

Even if only one ticket for such a carriage is sold, the carriage will not be open to male passengers. But if no ticket is sold one day before the train's departure all berths of the carriage will probably be sold to male travelers.

If more single female passengers need special berths, additional ones may be arranged.

The Shanghai railway station was not the first to provide a female-only carriage service on the Chinese mainland. It is reported that Xuzhou City in east China's Jiangsu Province was the first to do so.

Some female travelers said they often felt embarrassed when taking sleeping carriages with cushioned berths.

"I felt better in hard-berth sleeping carriages which were open. But in a carriage with cushioned berths, which was closed, I was often discomforted psychologically by the presence of male travelers," said a Miss Feng.

"Once I was dressed in a skirt and happened to take an upper berth. Then I had to wait till there were no male travelers inside the carriage before climbing up to my berth," said Miss Qiao, who often travels on business trips.

It seems male passengers have not appreciated the concerns of female travelers.

Some male travelers believed that a mixed gender carriage creates a harmonious atmosphere.

"Didn't many romances happen while a man and a woman traveling together, did they?" A young man surnamed Wang said.

(Xinhuanet)



Michele Abis on his crazy bike

By Tom Mackenzie

Beijing's bicycle sales could be set to hit record highs this year with more foreigners expected to take up cycling than ever before.

The city's estimated 70,000 expatriates are swapping four wheels for two in ever increasing numbers in a bid to beat the traffic and cut costs. And with warmer weather just weeks away, the trend looks set to spread.

"More and more of my friends are starting to cycle," said Elena Rospetti, a student from Italy.

"I think they realize that it's the best way to get around and with spring approaching it becomes more tempting.

"I bought my bicycle a few weeks ago to save money on taxi fares and to feel more like a Beijinger. It's also great for traveling through hutongs and getting a bit of exercise."

Braving Beijing's roads, bustling with pedestrians, taxis, buses and carts, may not be everyone's idea of fun but Elena insists it is not as dangerous as it looks.

"I don't think cycling is particularly dangerous in Beijing – it's certainly safer than cycling in my home city, Milan," she said.

Chris O'Brien, a copy editor from England, believes Beijing's broad avenues, tree-lined streets and narrow hutong make the city the perfect haunt for cyclists.

"Beijing is a sprawling metropolis but it's flat and is therefore ideal for cycling," he said. "As long as you keep an eye on what's happening around you, you should be fine."

The car may still be king for many Beijing residents, but with well over 2.2 million on the road today and estimates of 5 million by 2012, cycling could soon become the only way to get around the city quickly.

"I started cycling because I was getting annoyed with all the traffic and wasting so much time sitting in taxis," said Italian civil engineer Michele Abis.

"Sometimes in the evening, I cannot find a taxi to get home from work so it's very convenient to have a bicycle.

"It's good that there are bicycle lanes but you do find cars driving along them and other cyclists travelling in the wrong direction which can be very dangerous."

Hints and tips:

- Make sure you buy a good quality bicycle – the cheapest may not always be the best.
- Be sure to get a decent lock and bell. Those extra few kuai could make all the difference.
- Keep alert when you're on the road – you never know what's going to be around the next corner.
- Be aware of buses cutting in front of you.
- Be aware of other cyclists – they are more likely to cause you problems than anyone else on the road.

Where to buy a bike:

- Giant Bicycles, Room 101, Building E, Guoheng Jiye Mansion, 7 Beitucheng Xilu, Chaoyang District (8227 5718) www.giant-bicycles.com
- Global Boutique, 3/F, Ju Ku Market, 86 Anwai Dajie, Dongcheng District.
- Jinghuiqiao Bike Shop, 62 Dongsì Beidajie, Dongcheng District (6401 2599)
- Behind the Lufthansa Centre in Chaoyang
- Near Tsinghua University

Two wheels good, four wheels bad



Elena Rospetti and her bicycle

Photos by Tom Mackenzie

BJ's LOVE & HATE

Drinking with your girlfriend

By Gareth George

I met my girlfriend in a bar. She was a friend of a friend of a friend's wife. Or something. I was drunk. But she smiled at me. She works as a designer for an advertising agency. I used to work in advertising, so one way or another we got talking about ad industry names. We liked some of the same stuff. We went for a drink.

She likes clothes and dresses well. I dress badly. Sometimes she dresses me. She introduced me to her parents, to shopping and spicy frog. I introduced her to cherry beer and social smoking.

The security guards at my complex smile and chat with her. She has her own pass card and key. The security guards think I look moody; I only know because she told me.

I'm always late but she doesn't know because she's always later than me. We don't cook.

She likes salsa dancing. I fall over my feet. I like watching football. She suffers football and talks to her friends.

My friend David, who's known me at my best and worst, told me she's adorable and not to let her get away. He's never said that before. She smiled when I told her.

We agree on bars. We like going to bars. If we don't like a bar, we agree not to go anymore. Occasionally, over the pillow, we talk about the guy who spent all evening staring at us, or the group who brooded and whispered about us over their drinks. We talk about the people who shake their heads at us, then sometimes apologize and buy us drinks. We talk about how politely accepting them was the right thing to do, but how we won't go back to that bar. We agree on this.

We accept it because she's Chinese and I'm not. There's an unspoken agreement that that's how it is in Beijing.

St Valentine's Day: from pagan to commercial love

By Niall O Murchadha

The Christian festival of St Valentine's Day has its roots in the Roman festival of Lupercalia on February 15, which was probably dedicated to the Roman god Lupercus, the protector of flocks against wolves. On this day, young men would draw the names of young women from a lottery and would keep the woman as a sexual companion for a year.

Pope Gelasius I felt that was 'Enough of That Sort of Thing', and decided to have the names of saints picked out in the lottery instead. People would then have to emulate the lives of the saints they picked. St Valentine was selected as the patron saint of the day.

Some young Roman men thought the prospect of ending up having to copy the life of a saint was less appealing than a sexual partner for the year. The church eventually abandoned the lottery of saints, but the festival of Lupercalia lingered on.

It would be easy to argue that St Valentine's Day is just another meaningless, commercial and tacky western festival designed to remove cash from people's pockets. But what do the people feel?

Jade Gray, New Zealand.

We are going to Thailand for a detox holiday to clean out our systems.

Michael O'Neill, Britain.

Whatever I do I am going to do it the day after when the restaurants are cheaper.

Gareth George, Britain.

Nothing too fancy. Probably just go out for dinner.

Caroline Strentham, US

My boyfriend and I will have a quiet romantic dinner together, that's all.

Enda Brogan, Ireland

I am going to go out to see if there are any lonely hearts out there. I hope it will be a good night out and I will meet somebody who wants to be my Valentine.

Doctors without Borders: humanistic care and cure

Community



Hong Kong doctor Joanne Wong diagnosing a child with AIDS in Xiangfan, Hubei Province

By Han Manman

Eighteen years ago, private international medical humanitarian organization Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) came to China to 'offer assistance to populations in distress, to victims of natural or man-made disasters and to victims of armed conflict without discrimination and irrespective of race, religion, creed or political affiliation.'

Now MSF provides numerous medical supplies and assistance to Chinese people. Working in China for the last three years, Luc Van Leemput, the head of MSF in China, said "MSF started working in China in 1988. During the first few years, we mainly focused on emergency interventions in different provinces in China, such as providing medicine and shelter after snowstorms, floods, and earthquakes." He added, "Gradually, our focus has shifted to longer-term projects, such as helping the population in

Xinjiang and Tibet by drilling wells for the supply of safe drinking water, taking care of orphans and street children in Shaanxi Province, and comprehensive treatment and care for HIV/AIDS patients."

Their biggest project in China started in February 2003 in Xiangfan, Hubei province, which is the first project in China where the poor have free access to HIV and AIDS treatment. The project provides comprehensive HIV/AIDS care such as outpatient care, inpatient care, counseling and socio-economic support. "Today well over 120 people have received our treatment. In 2003, we were also involved in an emergency intervention during the SARS epidemic. For example, we helped two hospitals in Zhangjiakou, Hebei province, to properly deal with SARS patients in an effort to stop the spread of the SARS virus in the acutely affected province of Hebei," he said.

Luc said that although MSF is a very big organization and has thousands of volunteers and members worldwide, MSF only has approximately 40 Chinese staff and 10 expatriates in China, so very few Chinese volunteers are now working with the organization. However, Luc said that as the MSF expands in China they would consider employing more Chinese volunteers in the future.

MSF was established in 1971 by a small group of French doctors who had worked in Biafra. Upon their return, they were determined to help populations in danger and to find a way to respond rapidly and effectively to public health emergencies, with complete independence from political, economic and religious influences. Today, MSF is the world's leading independent international medical relief organization, and works in over 80 countries around the world. MSF was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1999.



Folk singing

Tempting fairs



La Yang Pian'er (slide show), accompanied by traditional singing and monologues, entertains the children.



Lama monks



Royal ceremony



Mud sculptures for sale!



Kuai ban (folklore performance accompanied by instruments made from bamboo chips)



Who is the real Monkey King?

By Virginia Stibbs Anami

Temple Festivals, *Miao Hui*, are enjoyed at many locations throughout Beijing. Some have longer traditions than others, such as those festivities at the Daoist temples of Baiyunguan and Dongyuemiao. Liulichang's Lunar New Year's activities known as the Changdian *Miao Hui* originally focused on a small Daoist shrine on Changdian Lane, but long ago spread over the entire neighborhood. Although the Lama Temple is packed for Spring Festival, its biggest celebration comes some weeks later on the Tibetan New Year. Ceremonies at the sacred mountain of Miaofengshan have been going on since the Ming Dynasty. This *Miao Hui* occurs for two weeks at the beginning of the fourth lunar month. Traditionally, groups of 'tea associations' helped make arrangements for the thousands of pilgrims. They also performed songs and morality plays.

I've enjoyed 11 Spring Festivals in Beijing. My own hometown of New Orleans has the annual Mardi Gras, so I grew up loving the fun of the fair. The swarming crowds, gaudy decorations and raucous atmosphere make me feel right at home with Beijing's *Miao Hui*. I've clamored to touch the stone monkey at Baiyunguan, bought candied haws on a stick at Changdian and pinned a good luck talisman to my shirt at Miaofengshan. The *Miao Hui*s are a good way to feel part of this community.



Soldiers taking an interest in Miao Hui.



Fire and incense brings good fortune.



La Yang Pian'er

Virginia Stibbs Anami (Japan) is the author of *Encounters with Ancient Beijing: Its Legacy in Trees, Stone and Water*, China Intercontinental Press, 2004.

This page is looking for freelance photographers. Experience and professionalism are not a must. We want your own perspective and views about Beijing. If you have any work that may interest us, please contact: lens@ynet.com, or call at: 6590 2520.



Armani



Peter Som



Chanel



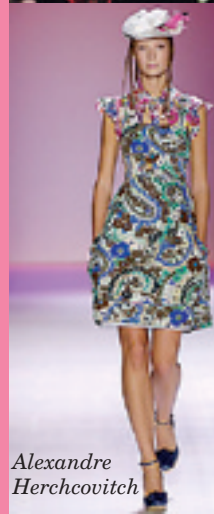
Christian Lacroix



Carolina Herrera



Dolce Gabbana



Alexandre Herchovitch



Elie Saab

By Shelley Xie

Runways in spring turn into a big garden of blooming flowers. From the dense bouquets that decorate neckline to hem, to the bold prints of chrysanthemum, peony, or sakura, fashion designers wake us up from our winter slumber, introducing a lively and bright wardrobe to match the fresh multicolored spring.

There are petals, flowers, and prints on every possible place to hint that it's time for you darling buds to blossom. As Rossella Tarabini, designer for Anna Molinari points out, "Flowers have an undeniable lightness."

Jill Stuart and Giambattista Valli are obsessed with petal dresses. The chiffon bouquets of pastel, pink and mauve cover the body, just like when you step out from a petal bath. The obis to outline the waist or to decorate under the chest are very important to add an oriental flavor.

Eastern wind

Speaking of the eastern wind that directs recent trends, it's hard to neglect the eye-catching effect of the oversized flowers - women in the Tang Dynasty (618-907) would wear flowering peonies as headwear, or dress in floral embroidery. Now the flowers are blooming, and sprawling; from the sheer chiffons and laces at Jean Paul Gaultier, Dolce & Gabbana, and Chanel to name a few.

Gaultier creates a barnyard environment with inches of hay covering the catwalk. The bright bouquets really shine upon the dried grass and his cream and corset. Finally, the color reflection is apparent on the last piece of his cocktail dress, with lilies, roses, lotus and nameless flowers forming a Y shape on a carnation taffeta dress from the model's shoulder to instep. This is an unrepentantly girly style spring collection.

Chanel makes their flowers even bigger and more obvious. Its trademark white camellias blossom out from the girls' chests, thighs and ankles, as if Karl Lagerfeld has a garden backstage and picks flowers to embellish a simple piece of cloth.

Floral temptations

From head to heels, you have no way to escape the floral temptations. Armani seems to reinvent classic beauty with bold and blossoming flowers on model's heads. They look chic and modern because they're not only chiffon flowers but also elegant hats. A pink rose on the instep of a pair of Sergio Rossi shoes brings a splash of color when you are in a sheer colored baby doll dress or a party dress that reaches the floor.

Fashionista know that the floral prints are never a passing fancy for spring, whether they're soft and feminine, bold and bright, or vintage-inspired and tiny. Elegant ladies put Versace and Valentino on their shopping list; girls believe in Gucci, and even men demand garments with floral prints.

"Flowers are the essence of the season," said Neha Pandit, stylist and fashion designer, "That's why, without fail, it almost always becomes a trend during the spring-summer season." The floral designs add a cheerful and upbeat mood to this year's girlish look.

Desert style

Donatella Versace gets her inspiration from Palm Springs. Among her choice of sandy shades, the cactus prints combine with a few chrysanthemums to embody the motif of the hot desert.

Borrowing from the eastern style, Valentino gives equal play to gorgeous colors, which appear in rose prints, and rich floral embroideries that capture the season's feel for Asian motifs.

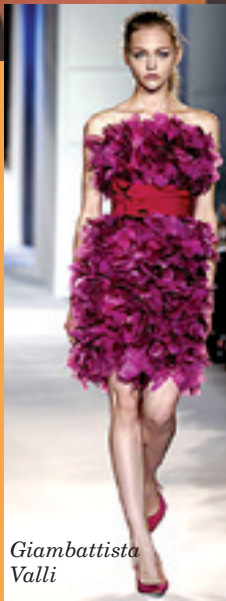
The sharp tailoring and hard edges are still popular, but Doo Ri Chung of Doo Ri use lace and chiffon more sparingly to welcome the mostly skin colored collection. "When I began the collection, it veered toward the sharp and angular," she said. "I introduced flowers to balance the hardness."

Gucci's Frida Giannini makes a 'prints shock' for its fans - where orchids and sweet flowers float on the floppy silk and satin. Red-out is a follower of Valentino's classic rose floral. Laser-cut petals evoke weightless armor at Alexandre Herchovitch, while blossoms open into cascades of ruffles at Fendi and Brian Reyes. Marni picks tropical themes such as palm trees, and Christian Lacroix mixes puff sleeves, outsize corsages and floral print handkerchiefs as headwear to demonstrate the colorful season.

La vie en rose



Vivienne Tam



Giambattista Valli



Versace

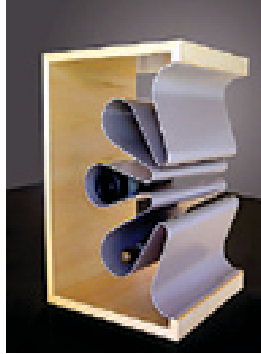
Rose chair Garnet Hill (US)

You can appreciate the 'wow factor' when it is hit by spring sunshine, which brings out the best of the elegant streamlined silhouette with a fashionable rose print in sizzling pink. The solid alder wood frame slipper chair features 100 percent cotton upholstery.



Bloom Workshopped (Australia)

It's a wine rack and also a table. The unusual floral petal shape is just the right size for wine bottles. The wood and metal flower fuels your desire to enjoy a good wine.



FuZion Glass By Peggy Karr (US)

Karr recently broke out of her traditional glassware mold to create FuZion, a collection of modern, clean designs in unexpected shapes. Most of the items in the series are floral designs, and each one-of-a-kind piece of art is suitable for food, and is dishwasher and microwave safe.



Floral frenzy for spring

Clogs Car Shoes (Italy)

The floral, embroidered shearing and wooden-soled clogs are quite eye catching. The vivid flowers and petals spread the fragrant and fresh breeze of sakura (oriental cherry).



Midsummer light By Tord Boontje (France)

Tord's midsummer light is made of two layers of cut Tyvek, a super-water-resistant paper and has a Mylar cone inside that keeps it away from the light bulb. Available in five different colors, you can enjoy different clusters of flowers above your head.



Romance Contraforma (Lithuania)

The laser-cut, powder-coated steel with a romantic perforated floral design is an unmistakably modern table with a new romantic twist. One model features a different color on the inside, creating an interplay of colors and shapes.



Frida Giannini

Gucci's floral hostess

"Sexiness is in Gucci's DNA but maybe I interpret it differently, being a woman and dressing women of my generation." Frida Giannini's remarks on her 2006 Spring/Summer collection have Gucci fans shocked by their fresh and sweet style.

"I wanted the new Gucci woman to express this through light, color and a new way of being real and natural," said Giannini. "It's younger and fresher, while still the confident sexy Gucci girl you know."

Famous for her best selling floral-print accessories, Giannini was appointed to be its creative director for women's ready-to-wear in 2005. At the time of Tom Ford's dismissal in 2004, and when Alessandra Facchinetti was discharged after one year of heading Gucci in 2005, Giannini took over both the women's wear and accessories. It was truly a hard time for her as she attempted to re-create and even go beyond Ford's success, but she also felt "It's wonderful to work with one image from the beginning of the collection to the end and make it all coherent, from the accessories to the clothes."

After her debut in September 2005, she got great reviews. "I loved them," *Vogue* senior accessories editor Danya Unterhalter said of the shoes, bags and jewelry. "I thought the chain black sandals and the classic yet eclectic Jackie-O shape that's being redone was divine. It was a refreshing resort fashion show." *Time Style & Design* editor Kate Betts said: "I think Frida made a very good first impression."

This justified Ford's faith in her when he hired her in 2002 from Fendi and "taught me how to edit a collection."

Giannini is planning to bring a timeless quality to Gucci. The Floral line of accessories, introduced in 2004, was inspired by the print of an old Gucci scarf made for Grace Kelly. "I want to continue to develop it, not sell it or mark it down," she said.

Her profound appreciation for the heritage of Italian style drives her into the Gucci archives for inspiration, but the ideas she emerges with are modern, dynamic and provocative. We are seeing a new Gucci woman emerge.

Giannini studied fashion design at Rome's Fashion Academy before apprenticing in a small ready-to-wear house. In 1997, she landed a job at Fendi where she worked as a ready-to-wear designer for three seasons, and then the designer for leather goods, where she developed her obsession with quality and detail.

In September 2002, she joined Gucci as handbag design director. Two years later, she was appointed creative director of accessories in charge of bags, shoes, luggage, small leather goods, fine jewelry, watches and eyewear. In March 2005, she was named creative director of Gucci women's wear.

Giannini is a woman that approaches her life as passionately as she does work. She is an avid horsewoman, and owns a prized collection of 7,000 original vinyl records.



Courage shapes a warrior into a hero

Jet Lee's final kung fu movie?

By Xie Xiaolin

Fearless is the latest and perhaps the last of Jet Lee's kung fu films. This former national champion of Wushu has gradually climbed the Hollywood honor roll from his first movie *Shaolin Temple* (1984), to become the leading kung fu actor at home and abroad.

"Fate made him a warrior, courage made him a hero," says the tagline. *Fearless* is the story of a national hero in the late Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). With an investment of US\$30 million dollars, *Fearless* is directed by Ronny Yu with Woo-ping Yuen controlling the action scenes (*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*). Michelle Yeoh and Sun Li (a rising TV actress) also give wonderful performances.

Fearless breaks the mould of martial arts films through its attention to detail, as well as having the international star at its helm. On January 20, *Fearless* lifted its curtain in Beijing, presenting a world where the jungle instinct still prevails and winning is everything, alongside the true spirit of Chinese martial arts. The movie took 8 million yuan at the box office on its opening day, beating even *King Kong*.

Fearless tells the story of martial arts master Huo Yuanjia (1869-1910), who was the founder and

spiritual guru of the Jin Wu Sports Federation. Huo (Jet Lee) dreams of continuing the legacy his father established as a world-class fighter in China. With talent and years of effort and practice, he becomes famous in Tianjin. However, a personal tragedy which claims the lives of his mother and daughter causes him to disappear for several years. A simple rural life helps him to recover from hurt to search for the true meaning of kung fu; his place in life and his responsibility to society and his country. The character undergoes a redemptive humanization as the film progresses. He's not so well known until he beats martial arts masters from around the world in an international tournament, which finally leads to his sudden death.

In order for the director to "present real fighting among true masters", the production team spent about US\$7 million dollars building original fighting places and half a year finding champions in different countries. The audience can enjoy Jet Lee fighting warriors from Britain, Germany, Spain and Japan, and experience the ups and downs of how Huo won international honors.

Yet *Fearless* has divided its audience. Most come

down on one of two distinct sides. Many are excited by Jet Lee's performance, especially the brave fighting on behalf of the Chinese people, while some are moved by the pure love between Huo and a rural girl (Sun Li).

Meanwhile, CCTV 6, in a series of interviews with viewers found many were not satisfied with the jerky plot or the spurious transitions. The dialogue seems to be unnecessary at times and other times artlessly deliberate. "I prefer the inherent meaning of the kung fu spirit being understood through watching the movie, not told through the lines of actors," said one.

Huo Yuanjia is the character that Jet Lee has been considering and developing in his mind for over a decade. Lee has imbued him with many of his own ideas about kung fu, his experiences in making kung fu films, and his personal life philosophy. "Chinese kung fu is not about fighting or war, but an exercise to build a strong and healthy body and sometimes for protection," he said.

This message seems to have been taken in by the majority. "I love its exciting kung fu scenes and want to know Jet's last interpretation for Chinese traditional Wushu," said Jason Cao, a sales manager.

A foreign story close to China

National Theatre Company presents
A Dangerous Game

By Yu Shanshan

It's always a problem for Chinese actors to act in Western stories, for no matter how close the facsimile, their figure, together with the story they tell, always looks uneasily pretentious and far away.

That's the first impression of *A Dangerous Game*, adapted from Friedrich Durrenmatt (1921-1990)'s 1956 novel *Die Panne* (*The Breakdown*) and performed by National Theatre Company of China. But the play finally turns a long day's journey into night – the predicament it raises can be shared by people of different cultures.

Salesman Alfredo Traps' car breaks down in the middle of the Swiss countryside. He is invited to spend the night with four old men living in a small town nearby. They ask him whether he wants to take part in the game they used to play with their guests. Alfredo soon learns that he is sitting with a judge, a public prosecutor, a lawyer and an executioner, all retired. The food is gorgeous and Alfredo agrees to play the role of the accused. His trial begins but by the end of the evening, it's more than a game.

The game setting, the retired lawyer's dining room, is beautifully surrounded by darkness, from the long table in the middle, walls, windows, to the flying black veils, and even the bronze candleholder. Actors also wear dark-colored clothes. Multi-media and



Li Mengnan as the salesman and Jiang Hua as the judge
Photo by Li Yan

other tricks of movement were removed from the stage. All of these helped the audience to center on the sparkles – inner conflicts, dramatic goings-on, and each word from the five actors' mouths.

"We designed the play as what Durrenmatt was skilled in peeling off the detailed outer world and structuring the drama purely by the hero's inner conflicts. He can tell a ridiculous story to unveil the heavy predicament of all human beings," said Wu Xiaojang, the director. The accusation and defense pricks the conscience of every viewer.

"In his stories, all the people have shortcomings. But the sleeping hero is such person who may be aroused in accidental circumstances," Wu said. The hero in this story, salesman Traps, is a hero who dares to view himself from within. The game gives him this chance.

Li Mengnan was the salesman. After a few glasses of wine, he'd like to tell secrets about how he rose to prosperity in business. At first he just boasts about his success, not realizing he's digging into the dark side of himself. With his story spreading, and with the 'help' of the prosecutor (Li Jianyi), Traps finds the 'inner him' that he never knew existed. His complacency haunts him. He feels guilty. To the old men's dismay, the salesman shoots himself to death. The game is over.

Li Jianyi plays the prosecutor who uses strictly logical inference to induce Traps to tell his story and its dark truth. Lin added to this role a funny flavor with his shaking hands, light forgetfulness and amusing voice. Yet we can still see the sharp mind in that old head.

Gong Yingtian, the scriptwriter added Chinese elements into the story. In some parts, the audience would laugh at some popular idiom that we can hear on the street.

But even without the Chinese touch, people of today can still get the point. Mo Yan, writer, first read the novel more than 20 years ago. "I felt unfamiliar with the life happening in that far away country, so different to Chinese reality at that time. But now China has entered the same social reality. The story can also take place in here. We can understand much better the meaning beneath the story."

Animated McDull grown up and like life

By Xie Xiaolin

McDull is a popular Hong Kong children's character, a lovable loser of a piglet who perseveres with his sweet, deluded dreams in the face of near-constant failure. The pig's first two adventures, *My Life as McDull* (2001) and *McDull: Prince de la Bun* (2004), has won quite a few international cartoon awards.

On January 26, Hong Kong director Peter Chan's Applause Pictures and Ruddy Morgan Organization released *McDull, The Alumni*, the third McDull adventure.

Unlike the first two movies of the series, the third McDull story includes a generous dose of live action (almost two thirds of the film). In this mixture, around 40 movie and singing stars from Hong Kong, Taiwan and the mainland play supporting roles as the grown-ups of the animated kindergartners (the first two stories happen in the little pig McDull's kindergarten), including actors like Sandra Ng, Anthony Wong, Alex Fong, Kelly Chen, Gigi Leung, Jan Lam, and Eric Tsang. There are even *Supergirl* winners Zhang Liangying and Zhou Bichang.

The film kicks off when a group of robbers breaks into the International Financial Center in the center of Hong Kong to steal cash and winds up holding dozens hostage at an advising company. In fact, everyone involved in the situation went to the same kindergarten although they don't know it at first. The cartoon describes

these children who once dreamed of a simple life. But in reality, their fates have been varied. The movie dwells, in excruciating detail, on how their childhood dreams of what they wanted to be when they grew up have all gone gruesomely awry.

It tries to present a deep meaning beyond the comedy – the adults are only children that grow up, who belong to one alumnus. "Besides the unprecedented gathering of so many superstars, I think it figures out people's pressure under modern society and how each of us purchases dreams through thick and thin, which arouses my deep thoughts," said Belinda Liang, a consultant.



Supergirl winner Zhou Bichang acts an office lady in the film.



Leo Koo as Dragon and Cecilia Cheung as Phoebe

Chinese Harry Potter girl, this time the magic is kungfu

By Xie Xiaolin

Unlike *Fearless*, *My Kung Fu Sweetheart* is a deep and meaningful film about a modern family of kung fu exponents and their huge pet bird. As a Chinese New Year comedy, the love story is led by a beautiful magic girl (Cecilia Cheung) like a Chinese Harry Potter. But she's also imbued with cool and kung fu.

In his continuing efforts to exploit the success of the kung fu series, Hong Kong's most famous filmmaking schlockmeister, Jing Wong has taped kung fu masters Yuen Wah and Yuen Qiu to star as a divorced couple. As the daughter of them, Phoebe (Cecilia Cheung), has learned martial arts since childhood and graduated from a kung fu academy. She falls love with a colleague – Dragon (Leo Koo) – but trouble gradually arises after Phoebe meets White Eyebrows, a traitor at the academy and the enemy of her parents. What's more, this kung fu devil wants to kill Dragon, who happened to witness a crime White committed, and also to kill Dragon's boss (stepfather of White's daughter) for his fortune.

During continuous battles, Dragon gets badly hurt and cannot survive unless he eats the magic 'forgetting love' pill. Phoebe gives him the pill and vows to win the war over White Eyebrows. She can achieve this only by learning 'true love kung fu' from a book together with Dragon and her parents, assuming the quarrel pair can agree to reunite and Dragon can remember his love for Phoebe.

The hilarious foursome are all excellent in this action comedy. It cost some 30 million yuan, and took around 2.7 million yuan on its opening day. Among the throngs who went to watch, Claire Zhang called it "a bit noisy and waste of time", but Li Feng said, "My friends and I enjoyed the fighting scenes in the WC and on the street with the umbrella."

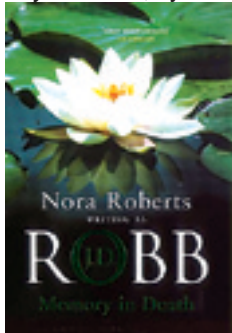
As a successful commercial filmmaker and box office winner, Jing Wong fully takes advantage of the love story between extrovert Cecilia Cheung and introvert Leo Koo. Above all, he aims to create a Chinese edition of Harry Potter with a beautiful girl. Cecilia Cheung tried to do all of the kung fu stunts by herself and it shows.

Bestseller booklists 2nd week Feb.

by Jia Ting

US – New York Times Bestsellers

1. *Cell: A Novel*, by Stephen King
2. *Memory In Death*, by JD Robb



(Lt. Eve Dallas tracks the killer of a woman who was blackmailing her; by Nora Roberts, writing under a pseudonym.)

3. *The Da Vinci Code*, by Dan Brown
4. *The Hostage*, by W E B Griffin
5. *The Last Templar*, by Raymond Khoury

Amazon.com Bestsellers

1. *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century*, by Thomas L. Friedman
2. *Night (Oprah's Book Club)*, by Elie Wiesel
3. *Marley & Me: Life and Love with the World's Worst Dog*, by John Grogan



(Labrador retrievers are generally considered even-tempered, calm and reliable; and then there's Marley, the subject of this delightful tribute to one lab who doesn't fit the mold.)

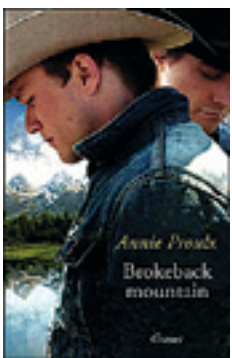
4. *Cell: A Novel*, by Stephen King
5. *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything*, by Steven D Levitt and Stephen J Dubner

UK – The Guardian Bestsellers

1. *Labyrinth*, by Kate Mosse
 2. *The Undomestic Goddess*, by Sophie Kinsella
 3. *Saturday*, by Ian McEwan
 4. *The Broker*, by John Grisham
 5. *A Lesser Evil*, by Lesley Pearce
- (In his final hours in the Oval Office the outgoing President grants a controversial last minute pardon to Joel Backman, a notorious Washington power broker who has spent the last six years hidden away in a federal prison.)

France – Fnac.com Bestsellers

1. *Les Chroniques de Narnia: Le Monde de Narnia (The Chronicles of Narnia)*, by CS Lewis
2. *La Trilogie de L'Heritage: Eragon (Trilogy of Heritage: Eragon)*, by Christopher Paolini and JJ Palencar



3. *Brokeback Mountain*, by Annie E. Proulx
4. *Le Photographe (The Photo)*, by Guibert, Lefevre and Lemerrier
5. *Les Aventures de Jack Palmer: T13 (The Adventures of Jack Palmer: T13)*, by Pettillon

Germany – Amazon.de Bestsellers

1. *The Da Vinci Code*, by Dan Brown
2. *With No One as Witness*, by Elizabeth George
3. *The Chronicles of Narnia (Adult Edition)*, by CS Lewis
4. *Lonely Planet Bluelist 2006: The Best Destinations, Journeys and Experiences*, by Lonely Planet
5. *Can You Keep A Secret?* by Sophie Kinsella

China – Joyo.com Bestsellers

1. *Running with Scissors: A Memoir*, by Augusten Burroughs
2. *The Ideal City*, by Han Han
3. *Outsider*, by Cute Tao
4. *The Da Vinci Code*, by Dan Brown
5. *Betty's Kitchen: Dishes for Women*, by Saba

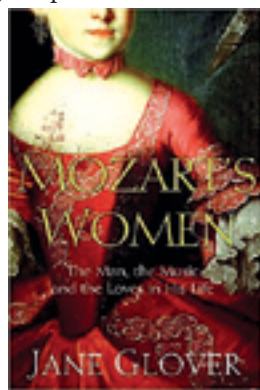
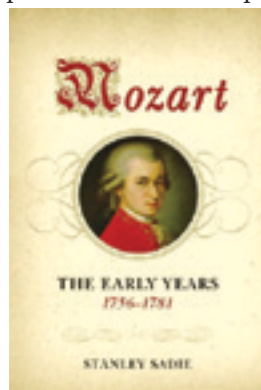
You wait 250 years, then three Mozart biogs come at once...

By Wang Xiaoyuan

Three biographies were released on January 27, to celebrate the 250th birthday of Austrian composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. They are written in different styles from three perspectives to provide readers and Mozart fans an insight into this genius musician's short life.

Mozart: written by Julian Rushton, Emeritus West Riding Professor of Music at the University of Leeds, is a biography based on Mozart's music. Cliff Eisen, a professor from King's College, London, called it "the finest short biography of Mozart... incisive, insightful and elegantly written." Rushton not only describes the hardship and poverty of Mozart's life, but also brings his vast knowledge of classical music to make some interesting comments on his works. Because of his lucid writing, the book is for both the layman and the connoisseur. About the mysterious death of Mozart, Rushton gives his opinion that the genius died of depression at being misunderstood.

In his **Mozart: The Early Years 1756 – 1781**, Stanley Sadie focuses on the teenage and youth Mozart. The hero of this biography is really Leopold Mozart, the elder. His own musical talent and ruthless training did set a base for his son's success. However, the elder Mozart also slowed the creative development of Wolfgang and his sister. By taking his family to perform around Europe, Leopold earned wealth



and fame. Sadie himself expresses his view that psychologically, Leopold might have dismayed Wolfgang's talent and his ruthless behavior was rather ridiculous – even in the eighteenth century. This is a biography discussing young Mozart and his relationship with the family.

Perhaps **Mozart's Women: His Family, His Friends, His Music**, by Jane Glover, takes the most relaxed approach of the three. Despite the book's title, Mozart was no ladies' man. The loves in his life add up to his mother, sister, a cousin, the four Weber sisters, all singers and Constanze, his wife. Glover, a leading conductor of eighteenth century music, views Mozart's life through the women surrounding him and leads to analysis of Mozart's operas in depth.

Top writers choose books every child should read

Don Quixote, *Ulysses*, *The Waste Land* and *Paradise Lost* may seem a pretty daunting reading list to anyone. But the poet laureate, Andrew Motion, believes that children should be expected to read them before leaving school.

Asked by the Royal Society of Literature to nominate his top 10 books for schoolchildren, Andrew Motion also included Homer's *Odyssey*, and Coleridge and Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads*.

"Of course it's a high ambition," he said. "But I see no intrinsic reason why children shouldn't read these works. They are wonderful, profoundly democratic works of art, but because some of them have a

reputation as difficult they are put in a box and called elitist.

JK Rowling's list also contains some ambitious titles, such as *Catch-22*, alongside more standard schoolroom fare including *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Animal Farm* and *Wuthering Heights*. She also names Beatrix Potter's *The Tale of Two Bad Mice*. Like Motion, she includes *Hamlet*. Pullman's Shakespeare choice was *Romeo and Juliet*.

The recommendations were sought by the RSL's Anthony Gardner after a discussion between the society and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority on the teaching of English in schools. The lists aimed to put together "a children's canon on which people

might like to draw".

JK Rowling's Reading List

Wuthering Heights, Emily Bronte

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, Roald Dahl

Robinson Crusoe, Daniel Defoe

David Copperfield, Charles Dickens

Hamlet, William Shakespeare

To Kill a Mockingbird, Harper Lee

Animal Farm, George Orwell

The Tale of Two Bad Mice, Beatrix Potter

The Catcher in the Rye, JD Salinger

Catch-22, Joseph Heller

(Source: *Guardian*)

What's on local shelves

Bookworm

By Wang Xiaoyuan

Until I Find You

By John Irving

820 pages

Actor Jack Burns seeks a sense of identity and father figures while accommodating a host of overbearing and elaborately dysfunctional women. Anyway, We have been accustomed to Irving's work as quirky, bizarre, and off-the-wall and have forgiven all by calling such high-jinks and characters 'imaginative' or 'absolutely original.'

The Mermaid Chair

By Sue Monk Kidd

332 pages

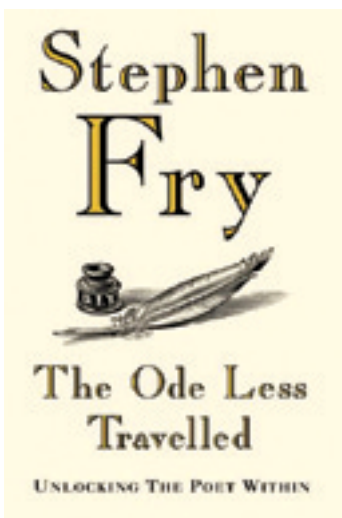
The book tells the soulful tale of Jessie Sullivan, a middle-aged woman whose stifled dreams and desires take shape during an extended stay on Egret Island, where she is caring for her troubled mother, Nelle. Like Kidd's stunning debut novel, *The Secret Life of Bees*, her highly anticipated follow up evokes the same magical sense of whimsy and poignancy.

Human Traces

By Sebastian Faulks

609 pages

What is it to be human? This question is at the heart of *Human*



Traces. A young, poor British boy somehow passes his medical exams and goes to Paris, where he attends the lectures of Charcot, the Parisian neurologist who set the world on its head in the 1870s. Later he

sets up a clinic in the mysterious mountain district of Carinthia in southeast Austria. The book is as grand as a Wagnerian opera.

The Ode Less Travelled

By Stephen Fry

327 pages

In the book the author provides us with a witty and entertaining guide to the mysteries of writing poetry. It will give everybody the tools to write poetry; covering the full spectrum of the different poetic forms, structures and techniques. According to Fry, it will make writing poetry fun, easy, satisfying, fulfilling and delightful.

Death of an Ordinary Man

By Glen Duncan

304 pages

Clark, a recently deceased history teacher, appears at his own funeral, hovering over the mourners. He then glides into the thoughts of his family's and lovers, just to find much more sadness. A captivating, appalling and effective book. What Glen Duncan, a major writer, has done is to produce an amazing piece of literature.

Where: Building 4, Nan Sanlitun Road, Chaoyang District

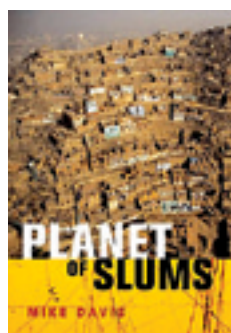
Tel: 6589 9507

Review

By Wang Chun

Planet of Slums

By Mike Davis, Verso, 206 pages



American urban theorists have spent the last 20 years discussing sprawl and edge cities, but cultural historian Mike Davis argues that the process is taking place at hyperspeed in places like Asia, Latin America, and Africa, where cities are devouring the countryside. Soon we won't be telling stories about the gulf between City and Country Mouse; there will only be Megacity and Small-City Mouse. *Planet of Slums* rarely stops in one place long enough to let readers catch their breath. Each chapter gathers a virtual catalog of horrors suffered by the global poor, ranging from lack of access to child exploitation. (*Village Voice*)

The Truth About Stress

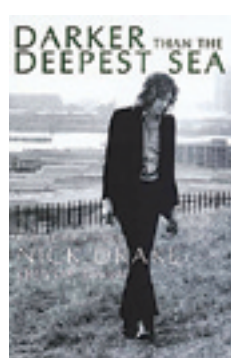
By Angela Patmore, Atlantic Books, 320 pages



In this book, former Fulbright International Scholar Angela Patmore argues that stress is a myth, and the 'stress industry' is an elaborate sham. Stress is now accepted as a part of modern life, 'because a powerful ideology has convinced people of its existence', she wrote. Fear of anxiety is not a new phenomenon and the author uncovers stress's antecedents in amusing places, from the 'flutterings' and 'spasms' of Mrs Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* to the pages of the *Spectator* in 1894, which reported that in an age of "luxurious indulgences" men were giving up hunting and polo because of 'lost nerve'. Today, 'life events' are what make us stressed out. Patmore's book will criticize the 'laughable logic which has medicalised perfectly normal human emotions and mechanisms'. (*Telegraph*)

Darker Than The Deepest Sea: The Search for Nick Drake

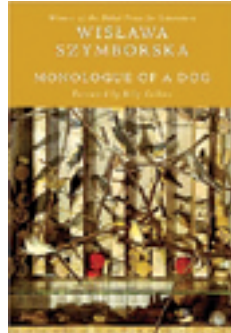
By Trevor Dann, Portrait, 288 pages



This book is surprisingly topical, and not just because of the deepening spell cast by Nick Drake, the English singer-songwriter, 31 years after his death. Drake died in obscurity more than 30 years ago, but since then his cult following has boomed, headed by stars such as Brad Pitt and Sir Elton John. The never fully answered question about Drake has always been why such a gifted, handsome and privileged young man sank so low that he fatally overdosed on antidepressants at the age of 25. In a theory that has some bearing on the current hoo-ha about cannabis, Trevor Dann argues that Drake was an early casualty of the vogue for smoking dope that swept the student hippie circles in which he moved in the late 1960s. (*Times*)

Monologue of a Dog: New Poems

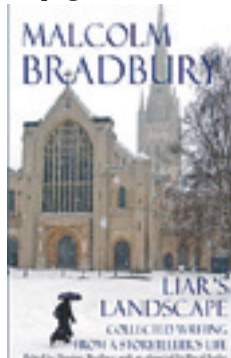
By Wislawa Szymborska, Harcourt, 96 pages



Almost as though she does not want to be mistaken for a poet, the Polish Nobel laureate Wislawa Szymborska usually begins with the plainest of phrases: 'I am who I am,' 'We have a soul at times,' 'I dream that I'm woken by the telephone'. Somewhere in every Szymborska poem, however, is a line – perhaps the second, perhaps the 15th – of strangeness, of hardly-possibleness, a shift so lightly handled that before we know it, we are yanked away in a conveyance that feels like a sensible sedan with airbags and a spacious trunk, but in truth is a psychic magic carpet. Szymborska, 82, lives in Krakow and has been publishing poems since 1952. (*The Boston Globe*)

Liar's Landscape: Collected Writing from a Storyteller's Life

By Malcolm Bradbury, Picador, 300 pages



From the 1950s on, Malcolm Bradbury helped give us a sense of our own history with a series of comic novels, each set within a university yet alert to broader social changes. The crisis of liberalism, Anglo-American relations, the sexual revolution, Thatcherism, eastern Europe, the rise of the media. No novelist of the late 20th century was more attuned to the zeitgeist. And genial and supportive of other authors as he was, none has been more missed since his death in the autumn of 2000. Five and a bit years on from that, Malcolm Bradbury's literary leftovers have been gathered by his son Dominic in a collection that takes its title from the novel he was planning as a continuation of *To the Hermitage*, the last book he published in his lifetime. (*Guardian*)

Money: A Memoir, Women, Emotions, and Cash

By Liz Perle, Henry Holt, 272 pages



Liz Perle was only 9 years old when her elegant grandmother started teaching her what she considered the financial facts of life. Lesson One began, 'Every woman needs money of her own that her husband never knows about. So she can do what she wants. What she needs. Remember that.' Years later, after a series of financial ups and downs, Perle realized that her grandmother was right about that bank account of one's own. But she also knew that Grandma had been wrong about remaining tight-lipped on financial issues. Women's reluctance to talk openly and honestly about money – with friends, husbands, children, bosses, divorce lawyers – harms marriages, careers, and retirement, she warns. (*Christian Science Monitor*)

Romantic couples with a passion for fine wining and dining, as well as each other, can celebrate Valentine's Day with gastronomic flair in Beijing.

A World of Two: Your own Valentine

By Wang Xiaoyuan

A World of Two is well known for its totally individual service. There is only one table and two chairs in the restaurant. Two



Inside a World of Two

Photo by Li Ying

guests are served at a time. It is also the only restaurant in town that charges by the hour.

However, I had always thought dining at a single table restaurant could be weird, as the waiter and others would see and hear you while you eat. Do couples feel free to talk and eat there?

The answer can only be found inside the restaurant. It is larger than I would have thought, as there is a bar and couch at one side. The table is set behind a semitransparent screen to ensure privacy. Recently redecorated, there is now a large screen in front of the table for customers to watch videos or slides. The size of the table is designed to be changeable according to customers' wishes. Other accessories, such as the tablecloth, color of light or music can all be chosen by customers. If you like, you can even cook for yourself.

Eating seems a little unimportant in A World of Two, although they do serve first-class western style dishes. Their baked mutton with vanilla and French mustard and the cheese corn pancake must be sampled. The restaurant has been promoting their romantic atmosphere for Valentine's Day. You may send a love letter to your lover with the postmark of Valentine's Day. The waiter will dress as the postman to 'deliver' the letter during dinner. You can make a sculpture for the two of you in the art salon, and various musical instruments are available anytime you wish to play. There are at least 48 schemes for consideration this year. Customers will also receive small surprises when they leave.

"We have served a couple celebrating 50 years of marriage; a teenage boy did the first cooking in his life for a girl; a sad pair facing divorce; and a failed proposal of marriage. No matter who they are, they will seldom forget the special romantic experience in my restaurant," said Wen, the owner.

This is a place you must visit at least once as long as your love lasts. Its owner often calls the restaurant an adult's fairytale, "It is all for romance, and all for love."

Where: No. 49, Xi'si Dongdajie (to the east of Sheng Li Cinema)

Open: 11:30am - 10:30pm
Tel: 6617 4200 Reservation only

Average cost: 1,680 yuan for two persons

This next eatery offers a special set menu for Valentine's Day, including a chocolate ice cream hotpot.



Seafood in the Golden Jaguar

Photo by Han Manman



Inside the Caprio

Photos by Wu Yan

Golden Jaguar: around the world in eighty bites

By Han Manman

Whether or not the Golden Jaguar really provides what they claim is 'the best buffet in Beijing', they offer the biggest and one of the most expensive. Italian, French, Japanese, a variety of seafood, typical Chinese foods, as well as drinks, fruits, and ice cream, are available. In fact, if you can think of it you will probably find it in Golden Jaguar's International Cuisine Collection.

A newly opened Taiwanese-run buffet located in Yayuncun, you will be truly amazed by the endless choice at Golden Jaguar. You may choose from over 300 dishes of various flavors in six different main sections.

Chinese Section: Freshly cooked high quality seafood, roasted pork, spare ribs and more.

Western Section: you can enjoy rib eye steak, sirloin steak, freshly baked pizza, salad and many other dishes.

Japanese Cold Section: Here is where you can find all kinds of lively seafood that is all directly transported by air.

BBQ Section: Tempura, Tepanyaki, and BBQ.

The labyrinthine space seats hundreds of diners, but is broken into sections so there is never a feeling of being crowded.

Foreign chefs are employed to make sure the food has an authentic taste. The array of food is simply bewildering, and you'll need a while to explore the various stations. It's such a confusing avalanche of dishes that you might want to group different styles into courses.

The success of the restaurant and the

growing demand for high-quality buffet dining has prompted the opening of two new restaurants in Beijing. One of them, located on Wangfujing Street, will be open shortly after Spring Festival.

Where: No. 214, Huizhong Beili, Yayuncun

Tel: 5128 1888

Cost: 180 yuan per person (11 am - 2:30 pm; 8 - 10 pm); 220 yuan per person (5 - 8 pm)

Caprio: more than just pizza and steaks

By Grace Wei



Lobster in the Caprio

Zhongguancun is the most famous high-tech zone in Beijing, a place where the most intellectual brains as well as picky palates congregate. Caprio Pizza and Steak, the Italian brand with a history of more than 50 years, caters to the most selective mouths with original Italian food and an appreciation for Chinese food culture. Its second restaurant in Beijing is now open in Building A of the Raycom Infotech Park, run by the Shanghai International Group Co., Ltd. (SIG).

Caprio's Pizza and Steak journey began in 1965, when Sir Davide Caprio, spent 23 years baking wonderful pizzas in the little village of Adriana in Italy. After that, branches were opened in America, Europe, Asia, and China. Wherever it goes, it combines the Italian character with the local food culture, while still being committed to producing the best pizza and steak.

Besides the Italian style pizza and steak, it now features a lobster series and western hot pot. The most classic lobster dish is the Provence roast lobster, a Mediterranean style available with four sauces - cream, tomato, garlic, and special XO (580 yuan).

The most innovative hot pot is the Portuguese style abalone hot pot (688 yuan). In this dish, abalone, a traditional Chinese food, is matched with a western cooking style, producing a special, lingering flavor. The Sicilian flaming lobster and the oxtail pot with red wine are also worth tasting.

It has two VIP rooms capable of accommodating a group of 8 to 10 people. In the public area, soft quartet music and the European style decor create a romantic atmosphere for those looking for relaxation and exotic colors.

Where: Building A, Raycom Building, Zhongguancun

Open: 11 am - 9:30 pm

Tel: 8286 1553

Average cost: 70 yuan per person (10 percent discount before February 28)

This restaurant can offer couples a range of international cuisine on just one plate

Dining out

By Grace Wei

St. Regis Hotel

Enjoy this romantic evening with your loved one and go home with a special Valentine's gift.

In Daniel's you will get a wonderful five course set dinner, including a glass of champagne and a paired glass of wine per course. 2,088 yuan per couple. Astor Grill - five course set menu with thoughtfully paired wines for each course and one glass of champagne. A rose for the ladies and a 12 piece chocolate gift per couple. Live violin. 1,588 yuan net per couple.

Tel: 6460 6688

Meet Cupid at Traders

Share at Traders Bar in romantic ambience the exquisite set dinner which includes a glass of champagne, delicate flowers for her, flavored cigar for him, sweet chocolate for both and live music serenaded by our musicians for the perfect Valentine's dinner. 288 yuan plus 15 percent surcharge per person.

Tel: 6505 2277 ext 35

Veuve Clicquot Valentine's at China World Hotel

Wine and dine with romance and Veuve Clicquot champagne at Aria, Summer Palace or Nadaman, and get a chance to win a stylish Clicquot City Traveler.

At Aria, accompanied by *La Bella Luna*, you can enjoy a four course gourmet menu including a glass of Veuve Clicquot champagne for the couple upon arrival. 1,188 yuan net per couple or 1,388 yuan net per couple (with wines matching each course).

Tel: 6505 2266

'Fairy Tale Package' at Shangri-La

If you wish to win your Valentine's heart this year, romance and impress her with this unbelievably Valentine's Day 'Fairy Tale Package.'

You and your loved one will be picked up by the hotel Mercedes-Benz from your home. En route, you will be served French Champagne and fresh strawberries. For the candlelit dinner the executive chef will prepare a unique five-course menu and dinner will be served by your own private butler.

When you are ready to retire for the night, you can look forward to an aromatherapy massage for you and your Valentine, and a butler-run honeymooner's bath in your suite, where there will be more French Champagne to go with the heart-shaped Valentine's Day cake placed in the room. A one-carat solitaire diamond ring with certificate from the renowned Elong Jewelry Shop will be the crowning touch.

Tel: 6841 2211 ext. 52

Enjoy Yuanxiao at Lantern Festival

By Fu Ruijuan

While we're still enjoying the aftertaste of Spring Festival, the Lantern Festival (Sunday) is rapidly approaching. In addition to appreciating festive lanterns, the festival is also celebrated by eating yuanxiao, sweet dumplings made of glutinous rice flour.

Usually, yuanxiao are stuffed and served in boiled water. Apart from the boiled yuanxiao, there is another kind of yuanxiao served in fermented glutinous rice wine, which is called Laozao tangyuan. Tianfu Douhuazhuang inside the 77th Street Plaza serves this dish.

Most yuanxiao are boiled, but Zhenzhu Yuanxiao (pearl-shaped dumplings) are steamed to eat with a larger variety of stuffings like bean paste or nuts. But the major difference between them lies in the casing. It is wrapped with glutinous rice. This kind of yuanxiao is also available in Tianfu Douhuazhuang.

It is said that the Lantern Festival marks the real end of Spring Festival, so enjoy sweet yuanxiao and draw a sweet conclusion to the most important festival in China.



Photo by Fu Ruijuan

Veronica's Recipes

By Veronica Smith

Chocolate makers Hershey, van Houten, Tobler, Nestle, and Lindt all had one thing in common: they were all men with moustaches! And of course they were also famous 19th century chocolatiers; inventors of chocolate making techniques such as fermenting, pressing, roasting, shell-ing, grinding and blending of the seeds of the cacao tree. Mr. Richard Cadbury, who sported a beard instead of a mustache, created the heart-shaped chocolate box used on Valentine's Day.

Saint Valentine, also depicted as man with a beard and sometimes a mustache, is of course the patron saint of lovers.

In honor of the originators of Valentines Day traditions it might be fitting to grow a mustache, and if

Love covers the heart - chocolate covered strawberries

you can't or won't grow one then you could drink chocolate milk and give yourself a milk mustache. If none of these ideas appeal then perhaps something more sophisticated, like these easy to make chocolate covered strawberries.

Ingredients: Plain milk or dark chocolate, one tablespoon of butter, 15-20 fresh strawberries.

Directions: Wash and dry strawberries, in a double boiler (any stain-

less bowl on top of a pot of boiling water will do) melt the chocolate and butter until dissolved. Dip each strawberry in the chocolate and place on a sheet of wax paper or tin foil. (Tip: never let water near the hot chocolate.) Let the strawberries sit one hour before serving.

巧克力草莓

原料: 纯牛奶或黑巧克力, 1 汤匙黄油, 15 - 20 个新鲜草莓

做法: 洗净草莓并晾干备用, 在一个双层气锅 (在烧水的锅上放一个不锈钢碗也可) 里融化巧克力和黄油, 直至全部融化。然后将草莓放入锅中蘸一下, 放于蜡纸或锡纸上, 一小时后即可食用。(小贴士: 热水不要太多, 水线不可接近盛热巧克力的容器)

Translated by Victor Bai

Hot diggity dog! The Chinese year of the dog is in full swing, don't miss next week's edition for our feature on hot dogs!

Photo by Liu Xiaojun



Jean Reno

Jean Reno movie exhibition

Jean Reno is bringing his movies to Beijing for one-night-only Chinese premiers. The movies are copies of original movies with original French and Chinese captions. They are: *L'Empire des Loups*, *Le Grand bleu*, *Decalage Horaire*, *L'Enquete Corse*, *Le Jaguar*, *Tais-toi* and *Leon*. There is also a meeting between the audience and Jean Reno at 9:10 pm on February 10. **Where:** Chinese Movie Data Shop (Art Cinema), 3 Wenhuiyuanlu Xiaoxitian, Xicheng **When:** February 10-12 **Admission:** 200 yuan **Tickets at:** 6417 7845

www.WestLord.com

Movies



Empire of the Wolves

Directed by Chris Nahon, starring: Jean Reno, Olivier Martinez, Jocelyn Quivrin II, Arly Jover and Laura Morante. A series of murders are investigated in Paris' Turkish community. In a steel-gray Paris, Anna is losing her

memory. She can identify the face of Abe Lincoln but not a photo of her own husband of eight years, Laurent. He and neurologist Dr. Ackerman urge her to have a biopsy, but she refuses. Instead, she picks a psychologist called Mathilde out of the phonebook in search of a solution to her condition.

Where: Cineplexes across Beijing. **When:** Until February 15 **Tickets at:** 6417 7845

Manual of Love

Directed by Giovanni Veronesi, starring Carlo Verdone, Silvio Muccino and Luciana Lizzetto. A romantic comedy about the four different stages of love: 'Falling in Love', 'The Crisis', 'Betrayal', and 'Abandonment' played out by four different couples at various stages in their relationships. The movie won several David di Donatello Awards at the 2005 Italian Film Festival. Italian version with English subtitles.

Where: Italian Embassy, 2 Dong'erjie, Sanlitun, Chaoyang **When:** 7 pm, February 16 **Admission:** Free **Tel:** 6532 2187

The Promise (Wu Ji)



Directed by Chen Kaige, starring: Jang Dong-chun, Hiroyuki Sanada, Cecilia Cheung and Nicholas Tse. From the enchanting if bittersweet opening, the film moves ahead 20 years to an extended and frantically edited battle sequence introducing General Guangming leading his trapped and outnumbered army against barbarian hordes.

A slave called Kunlun saves the day using superhuman speed. The general is so impressed that he makes him his personal slave. Chinese version with English subtitles.

Where: Cherry Lane Movies, An Jia Lou inside the Kent Center, Chaoyang **When:** 8 pm, February 10-11 **Admission:** 50 yuan **Tel:** 6466 2288

Love's a Bitch

Directed by Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu. This film tells a bold, intensely emotional, and ambitious story of lives that collide in a Mexico City car crash. Inventively structured as a triptych of overlapping and

intersecting narratives, this blisteringly intense film explores the lives of disparate characters who are catapulted into unforeseen dramatic situations instigated by the seemingly inconsequential destiny of a dog named Cofi. Spanish version with English subtitles.

Where: Mexican Embassy, 5 Sanlitun Dongjie, Chaoyang **When:** 7:30 pm, February 15 **Admission:** Free **Tel:** 6532 2244

Duplex

Directed by Danny DeVito, starring: Ben Stiller, Drew Barrymore, Eileen Essell, Harvey Fi-



erstein and Justin Theroux. In terms of living the 'American Dream', Alex and Nancy have it pretty good. They are a young, vibrant couple in New York City with bright futures ahead of them. But one thing is missing: a home of their own. When they find one, it comes with one feature they didn't expect - an upstairs tenant, Mrs. Connelly, who lives in a rent-controlled apartment, and who isn't quite as easy-going or frail as Alex and Nancy originally anticipated.

Where: Cineplexes across Beijing **When:** Until February 15 **Tickets at:** 6417 7845

Personal Classifieds

National senior squash coach who has more than eight years experience in squash coaching, received systematic training of Level Two Coaching Program in Australia, can help you to learn squash. The level A player of Queensland Open and Squash League 2001-2002. Can teach in fluent English. **Contact:** 6786 9985, 13701107349, d.liu@topsquash.com.cn

I am looking for a Canadian man who speaks English in Beijing to be my friend. **Contact:** 6010 1280

Ana, 30, kind and nice. Wants to find a native English speaker for language exchange. I can teach you Chinese. **Contact:** 6467 6711 (after 6 pm)

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 您知道**流行**的英文名字的含义吗？
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如：喜欢时尚和潮流的**辛小璐**，发送“wxinxinoli”到9638036，就可得到适合她的时尚英文名：含义为月神的Cynthia或Cindy，代表人物**辛迪·尼克松**，主演了热门连续剧《欲望城市》(SEX And The City)而获得本届艾美奖最佳女主角的女明星。Cindy是月神的昵称，代表人物超模名模**辛蒂·克劳馥**(Cindy Crawford)

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Exhibitions

Red Gate Gallery Artists Group Exhibition

A group exhibition will take place at the Red Gate Gallery featuring the paintings, printmaking and sculptures of Tan Ping, Han Qing, Wang Lifeng, Su Xiping, Lu Peng, Shi Zhongying and Zhu Wei.

Where: Red Gate Gallery, the watch tower of Dongbianmen, Dongcheng **When:** 10 am-5 pm, until the end of February **Tel:** 6525 1005

The Vocabulary of Power

The work of Mao Xuhui has been marked by a strong symbolic power, expressed in his paintings from 1985 to 2005. In his work you will discover the evolution of the artist himself as well as the evolution of Chinese society.

Where: Xin Dong Cheng Space, 798 Art District, Chaoyang **When:** 10 am-5 pm, until February 15 **Tel:** 6433 4579

Innovative Chinese watercolor



Zang Boliang is a new master in the world of Chinese watercolors. He has a strong foundation in traditional techniques, learnt from China's most revered artists, and has created his own unique style. His fresh, innovative use of Chinese watercolors to create vibrant, colorful and delicate works of art that capture the attention of the mind and eye.

Where: Beijing Central Art Gallery, 1 Nongzhanguan Nanlu **When:** 8:30 am-7 pm, February 10-17 **Admission:** Free **Tel:** 6585 9902

Music

Valentine's Day concert

Conducted by Li Xincan, performance by China National Symphony Orchestra, the Valentine's Day concert will be on stage with many classical songs like *Voices of Spring* by Strauss, *Salut d'Amour* by Elgar, *The Wedding March* by Richard Wagner, and Chinese folk songs about love.

Where: Beijing Concert Hall, 1 Xinhua-beijie, Xicheng **When:** 7:30 pm, February 14 **Admission:** 30-900 yuan **Tel:** 6505 7006, tickets at 6417 7845

Activities

The mines and the pines

There are around ten mines in the mountains surrounding Holly Mountain, and this is how the Iron Mountains and the Silver Pagodas got their name. If interested, visitors can buy different ores including iron, lead, and steel, as well as red marble. The pines in this area are not big, but they are like ballet dancers posing for us. The smell of the pines in the shade with the backdrop of the peaks rising out of the mist makes this a perfect setting.

Where: Changping District, north of Beijing. **When:** February 12, leaving at 8 am from the Lido Hotel outside of Starbucks. **Cost:** 200 Yuan for adults, 150 for children under 12 **Tel:** 13910025516 (Reservations essential)

By Lu Xiaonan

We are glad to receive your feedback. We will print employment, language exchange and accommodation information for individuals. Feel free to email us at bj-todayinfo@ynet.com or call 6590 2519

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New opportunities in cyber cafés

By Feng Nianhua

The city urgently needs 4,000 supervisors for its 1,000 plus cyber cafes, or 'net bars', according to the newly established Beijing General Security Service Company.

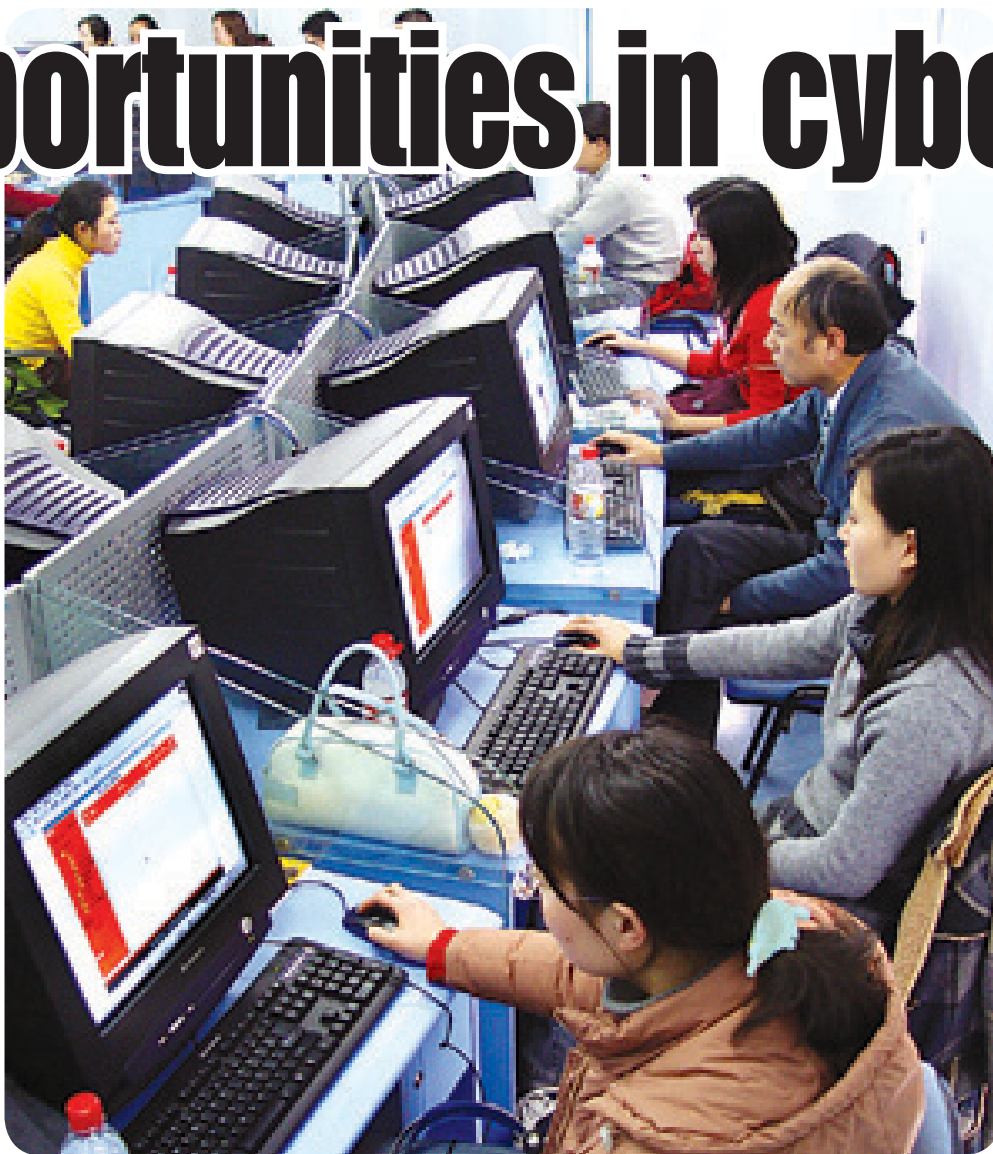
"Applications are pouring in," Wang Jianguo, deputy general manager of the company said. "We have received more than 600 applications since it was reported by the local media."

Wang promises that the first public recruitment will take place in June.

In fact, the company, established on January 6, has already sent 500 supervisors to 80 Internet bars in the city.

"We're consolidating the existing management in net bars first, and will recruit more to fill the 4,000 targets by the end of this year," said Mr. Wang.

All the guards are required to be educated in a computer related field. They have to take training in professional skills, computer knowledge, fire protection, and network laws and regulations, and to get licenses both for public security and network security before



China has over 130 million internet users and is expected to exceed 200 million by 2010. Net bars are prospering as well, which leads to a high demand for net bar supervisors. CFP Photo

starting their jobs.

The company has trained three groups of 260 supervisors so far, and the fourth group (another 90) will begin work by the end of this month.

Each guard is required to pass a yearly operation evaluation and retraining examination. Only those who satisfy the qualification will be approved to work for the next year.

Generally, the age of guards ranges from 18 to 45. Their monthly salary is relatively attractive.

"In China today, online crimes are rocketing," said Wang Tie'an, general manager of the company.

"They will safeguard net bars and ensure people don't use the Internet 'inappropriately', for example, they will crack down on teenagers browsing pornographic websites, online racketeering and fraud," Wang said.

Beijing has more than 1,000 internet bars, 3,000 internet connection units, and five million internet users, according to the municipal government's statistics. Each bar will have three guards at least.

Hot line: 8522 2747

Add: Beijing General Security Service Company, No.9, Qianmen Dong Dajie, Beijing 100740

Vacancies

Novotel Zhongguancun Beijing (under pre-opening) is looking for a Human Resources Director/ Manager:

- * previous experience in a 4 or 5 star international hotel would be a plus
- * fluent written and spoken English.
- * good communication and organization skills.
- * able to manage, train and motivate the team.

Interested applicants, please send CV and motivation to :

gm@novotelbeijingzc.com

Novotel Zhongguancun Beijing (under pre-opening) is looking for an IT Director/ Manager, interested candidates, please send CV and motivation to :

gm@novotelbeijingzc.com

The Southern Industrial Zone, Bincheng District, Binzhou, Shandong Province, is looking for two reps and five consultants in Beijing. Contact: Mr. Chen at 13561569235

Seeking Jobs

Female, 24, a native university graduate with two years experience as a office clerk, is seeking a part-time job as an English guide and accompany.

yubrcj@yahoo.com.cn

I am a PhD student in GUCAS (Institute Of MicroElectronics) looking for a part time job.

I have 5 years of teaching experience in Pakistan. Sheraz Anjum at 82847120, 13581806434

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Magic shows, magic class, face painting, treasure hunts and much, much more!

Special deals for charities, hospitals and schools. Email Mr. Magic at: parsons59@yahoo.com

A native Chinese university student, with one year experience as a Chinese tutor to foreigners is seeking a job as a language teacher. layla8311@yahoo.com.cn

Female, 44, looking for a job as an accountant, cashier, or warehouse manager. 13552517749, 6732 7217

Wayne Tian is looking for a job related to mechanics and electronics. He has good English speaking and listening skills. 13811508491, 6524 5508

Ivan Young, a new graduate from Beijing International Study University, is looking for a job as a business interpreter, management assistant, public relations officer, HR officer, or office secretary. ivan1339@sina.com, 13811243074

Jenny Li, a graduate from the University of International Business and Economics, is looking for a job as an interpreter or an international trade salesperson. 13611163663, jennyli63663@2911.net

Female, Beijinger, 29, certificated public accountant, fluent in both written and spoken English, is looking for a full-time job related to finance, or a part-time job related to English. lily948@hotmail.com 83477009.

(Send positions offered and wanted info to: ayi@ynet.com. Beijing Today does not take any responsibility for the accuracy or authenticity of the information published.)

Help yourself conquer END emotions

By Xie Xiaolin

When Spring Festival Holiday approaches, many employees suffer END emotions: Exhausted, Nervous, Disgusting experience. They are upset, dislike working and often get tired. Therefore, experts figure out the sticking points and solutions so that people with END emotions can survive at the beginning of another career year.

Think before quitting

As Spring Festival approaches, the office hustle and bustle turns to homesickness. Business topics have changed into holiday planning and talk of returning home and tickets. Two-thirds of employees frequently complain about their tedious jobs at this time of year. Many want to quit.

Many feel no challenge in their present job and have no suitable new job to replace it, so they feel frustrated. Many people do not modulate their personal feelings or mood in daily life and any imbalance in salary or benefits with colleagues or friends seems enormous.

Experts recommend keeping a positive attitude and staying in shape. Both help battle the winter blues. It is the best time to summarize both the advantages and shortcomings of the whole year and design New Year career plans – whether to quit or apply for promotion.

'Holiday syndrome'

A few days before Spring Festival, many are busy shopping and imagining holiday happiness. They are looking forward to a good rest, so it is hard to work efficiently. This lack of efficiency means criticism from bosses and the vicious cycle brings further stress.

Experts say this kind of 'holiday syndrome' is common in this competitive world.

Ease pressure by walking with your friends, visiting relatives, enjoying some entertainment. But above all, keep your schedule in order – eat less, play less and sleep more.

Behave yourself

As many people quit their jobs at this time of year, many companies plan for it. That makes this time of year a great time for people with END to go job-hopping.

However, even if many people have decided to quit, they may still love their present firm, or colleagues and are afraid of a new environment. Some vanish without working their notice and never talk with their colleagues again.

Experts say the short-term transition offers those quitters the best chance to work. Try to cooperate with your firm and hand in all the work you need to before you leave. Try to communicate with all your colleagues – maintaining these friendships may help you in the future.

Expats in BJ:

Beijing's story is Emile's story – Growing and Adapting

By Christopher Parsons

Emile Kroeger has worked in abandon factories in Northern France, so he appreciates Beijing's trees, Beijing business style and its wonderful ability to adapt while growing at a rapid rate. Emile's career is also adapting, while at a rapid rate – student to teacher, programmer to leader, gamer to game maker!

Q: What would the first line of your current CV be?

A: Emile is a French-American geek, teaching and studying Artificial Intelligence at Tsinghua University, in Beijing.

Q: What makes the Beijing business atmosphere different than the one in your home country?

A: Change. Beijing's ability to adapt and grow is amazing. Learning how to keep up with that change is helping me with my career.

And then there is the working environment, that is different too. Where I worked in the north of France before coming here, was abandoned factories, with the occasional tree growing out of a smokestack, that was the defining part of the landscape.

Here you get new construction sites, and new parks with fresh trees, all over the place. If you leave the city for a couple of years, you don't recognize anything when you come back. Beijing is where things are happening right now.



Emile Kroeger is trying various jobs and life in Beijing. Photo by Christopher Parsons

Q: What are you doing in Beijing right now?

A: I'm working on software to help people learn Chinese. And of course studying programming at the lab - you have to stay on the edge of technology which grows and adapts almost as fast as Beijing!

Q: What is your dream job here?

A: I am slowing working on my own start-up! Well, I know that's also a good way to get royally screwed, but it'd be interesting anyway. As a gamer

I hope to create games for other gamers to play.

Q: Many foreigners come to Beijing for economic reasons. What are your goals?

A: Originally came here to study, and well, explore my career options here, not with any particular goal in mind. Now I am working at least enough to have a better idea of how the place works.

Q: What advice can you give newcomers the Beijing business world?

A: I'd say, don't be afraid! Go out, eat cheap food on the street, negotiate and argue business ethics in Chinese! Don't stay holed up in your hotel or stick to convenient supermarkets! Things are way more interesting in the crazy crowded places.

Q: What is your favorite Chinese word or phrase you will use your software to teach?

A: "Good good study, day day up" – a word-to-word translation of Mao Zedong's "好好学习,天天向上". I like the Chinese student's ironic chinglish.

Q: What struggles must one face with jobs in BJ?

A: Teaching has many struggles, just try it and you will see.

Q: What is the biggest problem you have ran into?

A: It is a problem that student life is pretty sheltered, so are most professional expats!

UN to recruit linguists

By Xie Xiaolin

Online application for this year's primary selection for the United Nations' employees exam starts from February 6 to 15, according to the Ministry of Personnel (MOP).

Beijing Foreign Study University (BFSU) will take charge of the primary test for National Competitive Recruitment Examinations (NCRE), covering translation, editing and written recording (word by word).

The test is open to university-degree holders or above, mastering both Chinese and English, or Chinese and French.

Applicants can register for the test at: www.mop.gov.cn/yyks between 9:00 to 22:00 during the application period.

After the registration, the applicant has to send his/her copies of ID card and academic degree certificates to the test holder in BFSU before February 18.

Candidates can check the primary evaluation results to see whether they are selected to take the test from March 27 and March 31.

The test will be held in April. Only 20 winners will be accepted by the UN Secretariat as qualified candidates in its talent pool for possible selection.

Add: UN Language Test Group, BFSU, No.2, Xi San Huan Bei Lu, Beijing 100081

Hotline: 88816546, 88816547

30% grads can stay in Beijing

By Xie Xiaolin

Only 30 percent of university graduates (non-Beijing residents) can work and stay in Beijing this year, according to the Municipal Commission of Education (BMCE).

The figure is a privilege treatment for graduates from the country's first-class schools. The ceiling for the less re-

nowned schools is only 25 percent.

After graduation, the unemployed job seekers can keep their hukou (personal registration) at university with further recommendation of jobs or transfer it back to their hometown. But they have to take the latter choice if they cannot find a job within the regulated time.

Two million to train as entrepreneurs

By Xie Xiaolin

The Ministry of Labor and Social Security is calling for efforts to provide entrepreneur training programs for two million in the next five years.

The purpose, according to the ministry, is to encourage more people to start their own

business.

Since 1998, the ministry has organized reemployment training for 38 million laid off workers and 60 percent of them have become successful.

China has about 348 senior technician training schools and 152 poly-technical colleges.

Living in America (5):



Sai Ma (center) with her friends

Photo by Sai Ma

Friends

By Sai Ma

Like many of my Chinese friends, I started watching the TV sitcom *Friends* even before I came to the States, as a means of both learning English and learning about American life. Last summer, along with millions of other people, I watched the finale of its tenth and final season. It was an emotional and sad farewell to those six vivid characters who, after so many years, became just like real friends of ours.

Fortunately, we still have friends in the real life. Don't we?

For most Chinese living abroad, the toughest and most depressing thing is loneliness.

I always wonder why foreigners in China seem so much happier and make friends so easily. Sure, there is a selection bias. People who choose to go to another country must be curious and easy-going and therefore more likely to overcome the culture shock. Another reason, though not pleasant, is that dealing with foreigners is still a fresh and exciting experience for many Chinese, therefore they tend to be very nice, sometimes too nice, to people from other countries.

On the contrary, there is no such special treatment for Chinese students in the States. The only positive side is that nobody treats you differently. If you happen to be shy, quiet, and afraid of speaking English, people may just ignore you instead of bothering to make an effort to get to know you.

Let me share some thoughts and experiences with you.

Being able to understand and speak English is obviously the first key. Personally, I think there are at least two kinds of English: book English and street English (something probably true for every language). Only knowing book English makes you speak like a book and makes it hard for you to understand other people – nobody else speaks like this. You learn how to speak from listening to others, so a good way of learning street English is to watch TV, especially modern sitcoms such as *Friends* and *Sex and the City*.

If you don't speak English well enough, being brave and having 'thick skin' can help.

When I first came to the States and struggled myself, I was deeply impressed by a Japanese girl, Naho, the wife of one of my classmates. The first time I met her, she didn't speak much English and was quiet and apparently frustrated the whole night. After that, she and her husband threw parties almost every other weekend at their place, with carefully prepared themes such as a DIY sushi dinner, a karaoke party, a show of their wedding and honeymoon pictures...A year later, she speaks English better than her husband and has made friends with most of our classmates (over one hundred in the year!). She also passed an interview with a professor and then started her own school life!

Other than language skills, having various hobbies can help you find friends. If you are sporty, you will have few social problems. If you like arts, you can always find some people sharing the same interests and talents in the community center. If you love cooking, that is even simpler – most people's hearts are directly connected to their stomachs.

Then, whom do you want to make friends with? If you are a bit intimidated by fast-speaking Americans, why not start with people from other countries? Being foreigners themselves in the States, they usually are far more patient, understanding, and open-minded. They are often enthusiastic to share their mother countries' culture and history with others. Having a bunch of international friends myself, I've learned tips for making sushi, pizza, and guacamole at home...

Finally, the last tip is to always wear a smile – everyone smiles in the same language.

Sai Ma, was born in Beijing. Graduated from Beijing University in 2001. Now She is a PhD candidate in Policy Analysis in Los Angeles, US. Email: saima@prgs.edu

Scholarships heating up in the New Year



Many overseas schools put forward attractive scholarship programs to lure potential Chinese students.

By Xie Xiaolin

Many countries are making education a strategic priority and are trying to attract more international students.

When students plan to study abroad, most hope to get a good scholarship. Expensive fees in foreign countries mean some students can only go if they gain a scholarship.

But how do foreign schools provide scholarships? What qualifications do you need? Are Chinese students competitive in this process? A clear perspective at the beginning of 2006 can help you get ahead of the pack.

Britain: few scholarships

Public middle schools in the UK charge quite low annual fees, from 4,000 to 6,000 pounds, therefore, they seldom offer scholarships. Most of the one-year master programs rarely offer any scholarships either. At undergraduate level, certain universities only offer scholarships from 500 to 1,000 pounds to excellent international students with high IELTS marks or important national awards.

But many British universities do offer bigger scholarships to excellent students of quality programs, such as MSc (master of science), MCs (master of communications) and nearly all PhD students. The average scholarships the students can receive cover 30 percent to 50 percent of total tuition costs.

In addition, many private schools in the UK grant scholarships to attract more excellent international students and promote their reputations. The figure varies from 25 to 50 percent of tuition fees. But only 10 percent of Chinese students in the UK can obtain these scholarships, according to a recent survey by the education sector of the Chinese Embassy in London. It is easier to receive such scholarships in the first year but much harder in the following years. A student must obtain an average academic record of B+ if she/he wants to continue to receive a scholarship.

Some world-renowned universities like the University of Oxford and Cambridge University provide scholarships in accordance with the performance of excellent students. They measure these students using three criteria: English level; study scores, and personal ability. The universities will send an expert panel to China to interview the applicants. The successful students can even receive full scholarships covering total tuition fees and living expenses.

France: specialized areas

The public education system in France is free of charge, so scholarships are rare. Only private institutions provide certain amount of funds, most of which come from the government agencies and private corporations. The scholarships are usually targeted at students in sectors where demand for graduates is high.

The French Ministry of Economy, Finance and Industry has joint hands with the private sector and launched the (N+1) project, formerly called (N+i). The project is for students in the newly established two-year engineering program and covers half of the tuition fees.

Australia: research courses

Unlike the French government, the Australian government offers a small amount of scholarships, while its universities provide grants for research courses.

It is very hard to apply for scholarships for undergraduate courses but easy for master programs in Australia. The number of scholarships depends on the projects, funding, demand for assistants, and occasionally on the research experience of the applicants. Most scholarships cover half of total tuition while some cover all.

New Zealand: pro for PhD applicants

The New Zealand government has set up an exclusive scholarship for Chinese students covering all tuition fees, and these 10 positions are all for PhD applicants.

The New Zealand universities have set up a variety of scholarships for both national and international students. The competition for these scholarships is quite fierce, so it helps if you are really excellent, such as a winner of international contests. A winner of the international Olympic contest can receive a full scholarship.

Singapore: eight schools, 80% assistance

The Singapore government provides scholarship funds to all eight national universities and colleges. The scholarship can cover 80 percent of a student's tuition fees.

The eight schools in Singapore are:

The three universities: the National University of Singapore, Nanyang Technological University, and Singapore University of Management.

The five polytechnic institutions: Nanyang Polytechnic, Ngee Ann Polytechnic, Singapore Polytechnic, Singapore Public Polytechnic, and Temasek Polytechnic.

However, these universities and polytechnics require high qualifications. Chinese students have to sit math and English tests in the appointed places in China before applying for the scholarship. An interview follows the written exams. The accepted students have to work in Singapore for three years after graduation.

If students want to pay for all tuition fees of the five polytechnic institutions, qualification requirements can be lower.

In addition, Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA) can assist 65 to 70 percent of tuitions for excellent students.

Japan and Korea: flexible fund for Chinese

Most universities in Japan and Korea are encouraged by their governments to recruit Chinese students using flexible scholarships.

Japanese schools offer funds of 30 percent, 50 percent, 80 percent and 100 percent of total tuitions. Students do not receive scholarship funding during language study periods and receive 30 percent of costs at undergraduate level. Only master program offers full scholarship and a PhD candidate can receive living subsidies besides the 100 percent scholarships.

Besides, some non-governmental organizations also provide scholarships. You have to go through complicated application procedures and must have excellent language and academic records.

In Korea, 70 percent of universities reduced first-year tuitions for Chinese students by half. Their performance will directly influence scholarship amount for the next year. Some can get 80 percent off.



Finance is still a practical problem for many Chinese students who want to study abroad.

CFP Photos

Ask Ayi:

Q: I'm a senior majoring in journalism. Can I do further studies in the US? How does it relate to other majors in communications?

—Biqi0083

A: Most journalism departments like you to apply for either the master – professional career education or PhD – education on research or teaching. The former can be thesis or non-thesis, while the latter has more scholarship opportunities.

For majors, different universities offer a variety of packages, even if they are under the label 'journalism' or 'communications'. Most journalism courses focus on news, reporting, writing, but the University of Missouri also offers advertising, strategic communication and media management. Some universities offer marketing or public relations.

As for other majors, communications (general) focuses on theory (some schools call it media studies); advertising and public relations focuses on marketing communication, like consumer habits; mass communication combines the previous two majors, but in a theoretical research format.

I recommend you do an internship in the Chinese media: newspapers, magazines, radio, or TV. Since there are a few months to go before you need to apply, you can enrich your practical experience and become more competitive.

(Edited by Xie Xiaolin)

MOE: Three warnings on study abroad

By Xie Xiaolin

The Ministry of Education (MOE) has listed three schools, in Switzerland, Australia and Poland, as being fraudulent and warns Chinese students to be vigilant.

Some self-funded students were victims of rights infringements late last year, so the MOE warns students to take care of themselves when abroad, especially when choosing a school.

In Switzerland, the school is the EU Link International Education Center, which has already gone bankrupt but is still recruiting online. Some private schools in the country are recruiting under the name of 'university' or 'college'. The ministry suggests students go online at <http://www.jsj.edu.cn> to verify the qualification of Swiss schools.

In Australia, Pillip Australia Pty Ltd, or Melbourne College of Technology and High School, has been shut down by the local government for breaking the law. But its branch in New South Wales is still operating. For more details, please check at <http://cricos.dest.gov.au>

MOE warns that Wyzsza Szkoła Hotelarstwa i Gastronomii w Poznaniu carries false advertisements.

New Zealand lures students with loan deal

By Xie Xiaolin

CITIC Bank, in conjunction with the New Zealand government, will provide loans to Chinese students to study in New Zealand from January 10.

New Zealand immigration authorities stress that the loans can only be evaluated and processed in its offices in Hong Kong, Shanghai and Beijing.

In addition, only Chinese students in the designated 22 cities can apply, including Beijing, Tianjin, Shenyang, Qingdao, Wuhan, Chengdu, Shijiazhuang. They can go to the local CITIC Bank outlets for financing after approval.

Students for bachelor degree course need at least 300,000 yuan, while a language student needs 500,000 to 600,000 yuan. The credit term is valid for three to six years. After graduation, the students must pay back the loan in monthly, quarterly or yearly deposits.



The Hanging Temple



A cultural tour of Shanxi

By Hester and Arron Cheung

There's a famous Chinese song from the 1950s entitled *People say that there's good scenery in Shanxi*. The claim is true despite the revolutionary theme of the song.

West of Beijing and occupying the heart-land of China, Shanxi province is largely characterized by the Loess Plateau ('the yellow earth highland' as we say in China). The endless stretches of barren earth under the blue sky are the result of two millennia of intensive human exploitation. The earliest civilization can be traced back to more than 2,000 years ago in the Kingdom Period when a cunning royal prince founded the powerful kingdom of Jin and managed to control the north for more than two centuries. Due to its strategic location, Shanxi had changed hands among several nationalities throughout history, the last being the Yuan Dynasty of the Mongols which ruled its empire for less than 100 years, all of which contributed to the rich cultural and historical heritage.

Life is hard enough for most peasants taking a cave as home and living off small patches of arable land and low bushes, but the real wealth of Shanxi lies buried deep underground. With hundreds of millions of tons of high quality coal, the province is truly worthy of the name 'coal land' and is the lifeline of a country where 70 percent of the electricity still comes from coal.

Datong

Thriving with centuries of unbroken development of coal mining and trading, Datong, the capitol of Shanxi province is a lively northern city full of high-rise apartment buildings, crowded commercial districts and broadened avenues. Although most vehicles on the roads are old and worn-out, a few high-class limos and American 'Hummers' never fail to raise eyebrows – the symbols of the new rich who hoard large fortunes from the lucrative coal business.

Coal dust is hardly noticeable on the street, nor is a trace of dust or sand carried from the surrounding plateaus in the windless day. The municipal government has painstakingly upgraded the city's facilities in recent years and managed to maintain its status as a tourist city. Most hotels are conveniently comfortable and local restaurants tolerably clean and well-appointed, making it a pleasant overnight stay to jump-start a cultural tour of the surrounding areas.

The Hanging Temple

One of the biggest questions from ancient times is how people then created buildings through methods seemingly beyond available knowledge and technology. Approximately 60 kilometers from Datong is the Hengshan Mountain, where The Hanging Temple miraculously clings to the side of a vertical cliff in a dangerous exhibition of the defiance of gravity.

Masterminded by a monk named Liaoran in the North Wei Dynasty about 1,400 years ago, the unusual monastery nestles along a shallow hollow in the cliff and is supported by a dozen of wooden poles underneath and thick wooden beams driven deeply into the rocks at one end.

Although the stairs leading to the main entrance and the first temple are constructed from bricks and mortar, the three main temples at the higher levels are built entirely with wooden beams and planks that make the temple appear to be hanging in the middle of the rock wall. The plank floors of the main corridor that barely allow two people to pass side by side and creak and shake under the weight of an endless stream of tourists and the color-painted wooden railings hardly reaching the waist of a person makes the tour both exhilarating and exciting, but apparently not suitable for those who don't like heights.

Numerous earthen Buddha figures and gods are housed in the rock caves behind

each temple, several of which once served as sleeping chambers for meditating monks and Taoists. Religions in China have been very tolerant of each other, a fact that is symbolized by this monastery where Buddha, Tao and Confucius are worshiped together. Perhaps among all their differences of interpretation of life and world, they all believe the best way to achieve their goals is to be close to the heaven and their own gods.

Yungang Grottos

If an architectural marvel like The Hanging Temple can be achieved by the mind of a single monk, the Yungang Grottos would no doubt need the tenacity of generations of devoted craftsmen who started work some 1,600 years ago.

West of Datong city and spanning one kilometer along a mountainside, the site consists of grottos of various sizes and tens of thousands of carved Buddha statues.

Even the powerful Buddha needs a house built by the humans he's supposed to shelter and bless. The No. 5, 6 and 7 grottos facing the main entrance (a traditional Chinese style courtyard as often seen in Beijing and north China) are well protected from the eroding wind and sand dust in the magnificent four story wooden building attached to the mountainside into which the grottos are dug. These buildings were constructed in 1651 – much later than the grottos – during the Qing Dynasty with

a conservative design of red columns and yellow gilded tiles that can hardly match the aesthetic beauty of the grottos. Even the huge Buddha statues (such as the 17 meter tall sitting statue of Sakyamuni) in some of these grottos leave first time visitors the false impression of stepping inside an ordinary Chinese temple with gold-plating and rich color-painting on a thick layer of clay made several hundred years after their completion during the Tang Dynasty.

However the countless small niches with sculptures on the inner wall of the grottos are awesome with blazing colors and vivid detail. In the middle of the grotto a square pillar cut entirely out of the rock is carved with all sorts of Buddhas, mythical figures, banyan trees and animals telling the story of Sakyamuni's life and his ascent from an ordinary man to a Buddha.

The elegant Buddha statues of No. 3 grotto a little to the east of the main entrance are believed to be the work of Tang Dynasty some 1,300 years ago. The sutra-translating mansion once gracing the entrance has completely gone, exposing a large part of the grotto to direct sunlight. Inside, a light beam from the southern sky throwing slantingly through a small opening high on the front wall makes a beautiful interplay with the ambient light, giving the Buddha's white face an eternal expression of serenity.

But no grottos can be more prominent and attract more visitors and worshippers, from monks to common people, than the No. 3 where Sakyamuni's sitting statue is flanked by two other smaller Buddha statues. With the front chamber entirely collapsed, the Buddha appears to be staring at the south sky and meditating in perfect peace. It's not impossible for visitors to share a sacred moment of holiness and respect inspired by their inner God, but are we really able to live a life of less desire and greed as preached by the Buddha thousands of years ago in a world of materialism and mass consumerism? If the Buddha can really see, it might not only be the southern sky but also the Datong Mine which is still churning out hundreds of thousands of tons of coal daily and the 100 coal carriers that transport them to every corner of the country and abroad. However we must feel grateful to our ancestors who left us an important cultural heritage and also a hint that there is a capacity in everyone to be good and just.



The Hanging temple



The view from the Hanging Temple



Inside the Hanging Temple



Monks come to Yungang Grottos



The Buddha in Yungang Grottos



The stone Buddhas in Yungang Grottos